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MUSIC:

AS IT WAS, AND AS IT IS.

BY

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"I say these things, not that ye only may sing praises; but that ye may teach your wives and children to sing such songs, not only in weaving and in other work, but especially at table."—*Chrysostom on Ps.* xli.

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TO THE MEMORY OF

AUGUSTUS FOSTER LYDE;

REMOVED BY HEAVENLY WISDOM

FROM THE THRESHOLD OF A STAGE OF USEFULNESS,

ON WHICH HIS CULTIVATED MIND,

ARDENT DEVOTION, AND FINE TASTE,

GAVE PROMISE OF

A BRILLIANT AND SUCCESSFUL CAREER;

As a Slight Tribute

TO THE NOBLE EXAMPLE

OF A MUCH LAMENTED COMPANION IN THEOLOGICAL STUDY,

AND ITS APPROPRIATE RECREATIONS,

INTELLECTUAL, SOCIAL, AND SPIRITUAL,

This Little Volume

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

INTRODUCTION, ... 1

CHAPTER I.

The Past Progress of Music, ... 4

CHAPTER II.

The Present State of Music, ... 46

CHAPTER III.

The True Standard of Modern Music, ... 64

CHAPTER IV.

The Proper Style of Sacred Music, ... 82

CHAPTER V.

The Due Performance of Sacred Music, ... 126

CONCLUSION, ... 134

PREFACE.

THIS little volume on Music, is designed for *masters*, *amateurs*, and *learners*. It has been prepared and published at the request and solicitation of many persons, among whom are some of each of these classes. Adapted, at least in the intention of the author, to open to the comprehension of all readers some of the leading principles of good taste in modern music, it is respectfully commended to the good-will of all lovers and promoters of this delightful art and elevating science.

Music, considered merely as a subject for the pen of the historian and the philosopher, has been long honored with the rank of an important department in complete libraries. English literature, as well as that of several nations on the Continent, has been, within a century past, largely enriched with voluminous works on the history and theory of music in all its various relations. But such works as the nine huge quartos of Hawkins and Burney, inaccessible indeed to the mass of readers in this country, contain much that is quite unintelligible to persons unacquainted with the science, and unskilled in the practice of music. A large proportion of matter, equally useless to such, is found also in some of the elaborate articles which have been compiled, mostly from those works, for the pages of Encyclopædias. And in some treatises on music, which have justly obtained an extensive circulation, on account of their general merit—for instance, the entertaining

works of Latrobe, Higgins, and Gardiner—even the occasional mistakes of Burney and Hawkins with regard to ancient music, have been frequently transcribed, along with the valuable results of their successful researches; and thus propagated the more widely among the many, who must at all events take much upon this subject at second-hand.

With such facts in view this little volume has been prepared; not without a diligent investigation of the ancient authorities on which some of its statements and arguments are based, and an extensive review of such sources of original information upon this subject as are accessible in this country. And in the discussion of some points, the author has been materially aided by the courtesy and counsel of gentlemen, who are justly eminent for their attainments in the kindred sciences of theology and music, and in all that pertains to accomplished scholarship and fine taste. To this acknowledgment of their kind attentions he would gladly add the mention of their names, if he could deem it proper to require them thus to share the responsibility of his productions.

It may not be amiss to add, that the title adopted by the author is designed rather to indicate the plan of his argument, as mainly a comparative view of ancient and modern music, in the most prominent characteristics of each, than to intimate its comprehensiveness with regard to either. With these remarks he cheerfully submits his little volume to the judgment, censures and suggestions, of all who may favor it with attentive perusal.

INTRODUCTION.

In one of the most ancient portions of Holy Scripture it is declared, that when the Almighty laid the foundations of the earth, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."* And the most glorious visions of heavenly things set forth upon one of the last rolls of divine revelation, represent those who, redeemed from among men, obtain the victory of faithful servants of God, as "harpers harping with their harps, and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb."†

These familiar descriptions, with others of similar import in various parts of sacred writ, plainly teach, that there is, in the eternal employments of holy angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, something which may be very fitly illustrated by earthly music, considered as combining the sounds of voices and instruments, and depending, in the highest degree, upon fixed principles and laws. Nor is any farther testimony of Holy Scripture needed, to show that the cultivation of music as a

* Job xxxviii. 7.

† Rev. xiv. 2. xv. 3.

very perfect science, and the practice of music as an important art, at once elegant and highly useful, are intimately connected both with the advancement of mankind in civilization, and with the progress of the Church of God. A single pertinent illustration of this proposition, however, will not be out of place here.

The importance of Ecclesiastical Architecture, and of much care in the application of principles of good taste to the noble art of erecting and adorning edifices for the public worship of the Almighty is, at the present time, very generally admitted. An astonishing improvement in the state of public feeling with regard to this matter constitutes one of the most striking features of American society during this second quarter of the nineteenth century. And whatever might be said as to the prevailing taste in architecture in certain communities, the general interest now manifested in the advancement of that noble art is very commendable and encouraging. But it is safe to assert, that a similar improvement in public feeling with regard to sacred music, and a similar interest in its advancement should be deemed even more desirable. The most important of those results of the progress of Christianity, which, in the ways of Divine wisdom and providence, depend in some degree upon the extension of true science and the arts of civilized life, must, from the very nature of things, be more fully attained by the direct worship and service of God with the finest faculties of rational beings, than by any indirect symbolizing of eligious sentiment, through the medium of inani-

mate structures of wood and stone. Moreover, music, whether viewed with reference to its scientific principles, which are settled upon a basis most certain and stable, or with regard to its claims as an art, is no whit inferior to architecture. And sacred music is more generally intelligible and appreciable, in those particulars which constitute real excellence of style, than is Ecclesiastical Architecture.

As, then, this appropriate illustration of the importance of sacred music suggests, so the proposition sustained by it, respecting the connection of sacred music with the moral improvement of mankind and the progress of society, seems to require, in the first place, some brief notice of a few main points in the history of music, embracing the most eventful stages of its *past progress*.

CHAPTER I.

PAST PROGRESS OF MUSIC.

CONCERNING the state of music, either sacred or secular, in ancient times, little can be said with certainty. It doubtless held, in some of the most celebrated of ancient nations, the rank of a very important and honorable art. But whether it was cultivated any where to a very high degree, either as a science or as an art, is a question which, amid the many allusions of ancient writers, both sacred and secular, to the use, power and influence of music on various occasions, cannot be decided beyond all dispute.

In spite even of the most intricate refinements of the philosophical Greeks, with their famous systems, genera and modes, it seems to be the general opinion of such modern writers as must be deemed the most competent to discuss this subject, that ancient music was quite rude. Adverse to this opinion, however, there is abundant testimony to shield from the charge of enthusiastic and overweening admira-

tion of antiquity, those who hold that in the art of music, as in others, the ancients may have made attainments, which the moderns have not been prepared to appreciate. And some of the particulars of such testimony derived from secular history are not destitute of important bearing, as respects the state of music in ancient times.

For example: Among the relics of ancient art discovered in the ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii, which were buried in ashes nearly two thousand years ago, there was brought to light from the barracks of the latter city, a musical instrument somewhat similar in form and design to the *trombone;* which is one of the most effective and important of all instruments in a modern band of horns. The remarkable instrument thus recovered from the rubbish of antiquity is described by an entertaining writer in these words:—"The lower part of it is made of bronze, and the upper with the mouth-piece of solid gold. The king of Naples made a present of it to George III.; and from this antique the instruments now called by the Italians *tromboni* have been fashioned."*

This assertion, indeed, respecting the *invention* of the trombone, seems to have been made without due investigation of the subject. The trombone is a trumpet, which consists partly of a movable or sliding shaft; comprising a considerable portion of the whole tube of the instrument. It is, in other words, a *draw-trumpet.* But such an instrument

* Gardiner's Music of Nature, p. 353.

had been mentioned by Luscinius, in the first part of the sixteenth century. And to his account of a trumpet with "ductile tubes of brass,"* may be added that of Mersennus, who, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, wrote a minute description of the trombone; as a "tractile or movable trumpet, of which a part might be drawn out from another part, and returned into it again, as a sword is hid in its sheath;" with much more to the same effect, giving in detail nearly all the parts of the trombone now in use.†

Nevertheless, an instrument bearing some resemblance to this was discovered at Pompeii. This fact the learned Dr. Burney attests, from personal knowledge; speaking of an "inedited instrument" just brought to light toward the close of the last century, and giving a diagram of it in the appendix to his first volume. Another learned writer also mentions two instruments found at Herculaneum and Pompeii, and says concerning one of them, that "in quality of tone it has not been equalled by any of modern manufacture."‡ And of these two instruments, the one would seem to be the "inedited instrument" described by Dr. Burney, and the other the *antique* mentioned by Gardiner.

Now the ancient instrument thus recovered after the lapse of eighteen hundred years, is supposed by some learned men to be the same which is called in

* Hawkins's History of Mus., Vol. II., p. 454.
† Martini Storia della Musica, Vol. I., p. 429.
‡ Lond. Encycl., P. xxix., p. 276.

the book of Daniel the sackbut.* And this opinion affords ground for a higher estimate of the sacred music of the ancient Jews, than most musicians of modern times have been wont to adopt. The existence of such an instrument in the days of Daniel, would indicate no low state of that species of music which is produced by wind instruments. A corresponding advancement in various species of music is indicated by the description of a concert or union of various instruments, which is plainly implied where the decree of Nebuchadnezzar concerning the golden image in the plain of Dura mentions "the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music."† All this cannot be with reason understood otherwise, than to denote a considerable degree of skill in music on the part of the Chaldeans. And yet, while the children of Israel wept at the waters of Babylon, and hanged their harps upon the willows, those that carried them captive thither desired them to sing "one of the songs of Zion;"‡ not without an appearance of admiration of such music; the idea of some divines and commentators that the request of the captors was intended as an insult to the mourning Jews being altogether a gratuitous supposition. Whether, then, the Babylonians had, or had not, among all their instruments of music, any thing similar to the instrument found at Pompeii, it is not an unauthorized conclusion, that the music with which the

* Comp. Gardiner, Hawkins, and Lond. Encycl., as cited.

† Dan. iii. 5, 10, 15. ‡ Ps. cxxxvii. 3.

heavenly sentiments of the book of Psalms were set forth in the worship of the ancient Jews was quite worthy of its place, notwithstanding its imperfections, as compared with the productions and performances of the great masters of music in the Christian Church.* This conclusion, moreover, in view of the decided separation and alienation of Jews from Christians ever since the destruction of Jerusalem, derives some confirmation from the fact, that among the best themes and most pleasing melodies employed by a very celebrated composer of the last century,† are to be found various airs which were used at that time by the Jews in different cities of Europe; the musical taste and skill of that remarkable people being, with their other peculiarities, in a high degree traditionary; although the best melodies employed by them at the present day, in their sacred music, may have been of recent origin.‡

Similar evidence of skill in music, on the part

* Burney gives from personal knowledge the following anecdote:—

About the middle of the eighteenth century, the grand Caliph of Persia being on an embassy at St. Petersburg, had the service of his religion performed in a kind of mosque fitted up for his use in the palace of the Czar. A Jewish priest who was there at the same time, upon hearing that service, found the singing so similar to that of the German synagogues, that he thought it was performed in derision of the Jews. But upon inquiry, finding that it was the kind of singing common in Persia, he concluded that the Persians had borrowed it from the ancient Jews.—*Gen. Hist. of Mus.*, Vol. II., p. 256.

† Benedetto Marcello; sometimes called, by the Italians, "the Prince of Music."

‡ This appears from the diversity of such melodies.

of the ancient Jews, may be derived from what is related in Holy Scripture, concerning the use of trumpets in some of their services.* When we read of an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets,† we are apt to conclude, that the result of ther performances was chiefly a great noise, without much of real music in it, either in the form of harmony or melody. But let it be supposed that there is some ground for a conjecture, that of the hundred and twenty trumpets thus employed, there were many classes of different size and pitch, like the various pipes in the several stops of an organ; and that by the training and arrangement of the priests, the performer who had a trumpet of a certain size or pitch, or the whole class of those who had trumpets in unison, sounding the same note in higher and lower octaves, produced effects similar to those which an organist produces, by touching a certain key, or all the keys of the same name or degree, in his instrument. It is manifest, that music of no mean character might be produced, by such a number of horns so employed. And sufficient ground for the supposition thus offered is furnished by an account of a similar arrangement in modern times, which is described by an ingenious writer, already named,‡ to this effect:

"There is a species of horn or trumpet music in Russia that surpasses every thing of its kind. A French gentleman, a musician of celebrity,§ visiting

* 1 Chron. xv. 28. xvi. 4–6.
† 2 Chron. v. 12.
‡ Gardiner, pp. 349, 350.
§ M. Baillot.

at the court of the emperor at Moscow, was conducted by a prince into a long, dark gallery, where, at a distance, was stationed this extraordinary band. The composer listened with astonishment, and was asked by the prince, what he thought of it. 'All that I know,' replied the musician, 'is, that it is like nothing on this earth. It is the music of another world, and I am utterly at a loss even to guess how it is produced.' Lights were instantly brought, and there appeared two hundred soldiers, each with a trumpet or horn in his hand, varying in length from the size of an extinguisher—which they much resembled—to twenty feet. And what is most extraordinary, while each performer made upon his instrument but a single note, yet all fell in succession so aptly, that the two hundred tones, in performing a symphony of Haydn's, had the effect of one grand instrument. The power of accent thus exerted by every person upon his individual note, gave a series of effects to the performance unattainable in any other way, and as endless as they were surprising."

The author of this account wrote under the impression that it could "only be heard in the palace of the emperor." But a writer of "travels in Russia" at the beginning of this century,* gives a similar account of another exhibition, on a smaller scale, of the same species of music, which is said to be unknown except in Russia or Poland.† "It was invented," he says, "by a Prince Gallitzin, in the

* Porter. † Quarterly Review, Vol. II., p. 287.

year 1762. This instrument consists of forty persons, whose life is spent in blowing one note. The sounds produced are similar to those of an immense organ, with this difference, that each note seems to blend with its preceding and following one; a circumstance that occasions a blunt sensation to the ear, and gives a monotony to the whole. However the effect possesses much sublimity. Some of the performers play at different times on several pipes of various sizes which breathe the higher notes; but the bass pipes have each their unchanging blower. They are extremely long, and are laid upon a machine or trussel. The shape is exactly that of a hearing trumpet; and a screw is inserted near the bell of the tube, to give it a sharper or flatter note, as may be required."

In view of these and other similar accounts of the musical skill of the Russians, it may, without much risk, be supposed that the effect of the trumpets sounded by the priests in the temple at Jerusalem was, at times, somewhat similar to that of a succession of single notes upon an organ of loud and harsh stops and of imperfect mechanism. And at all events, the conjecture thus suggested with regard to the character of some of the music of ancient times, leads very directly to an interesting and important view of some of the most prominent stages of modern advancement both in the science and the art of music, and the most effectual of all the causes by which its progress has been vastly accelerated within the last three centuries.

It is not easy, indeed, to trace with precision the

history and progress of music from the days of Nehemiah to the date of the invention of organs. Nor is it necessary here to undertake a critical investigation respecting the period to which that invention, or the introduction of the organ into Christian worship, must be referred. It will, for the present, suffice to remark, that the great improvement of this noble instrument in the sixteenth century,* including the period of the Reformation, presents an instance of successful application of human ingenuity and of rapid progress in useful arts, not unworthy to be associated with the printing-press and the mariner's compass, and other great inventions of modern times. But in view of the obvious bearing of this remark, as respects the recent progress of modern civilization, from its immediate sources in all the great intellectual, moral, and social movements of the eventful period included in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the condition and progress of music in the early ages of Christianity must by no means be overlooked.

Of course, in the infancy of the Christian church, and during its period of bondage, under the oppression of Jewish and Pagan persecutors, much progress in the cultivation of instrumental music was impracticable. The great question concerning the state of sacred music at that period is this. Does it indicate a disposition in the most faithful and zealous Christians of primitive times, to cherish such an interest in music as would naturally result, under greater external prosperity of the church, in the

* See Encycl. Amer., Art. Organ. La Trobe, p. 349.

cultivation of this delightful art, and the adoption of those inventions and improvements, which might, from time to time, be made applicable to promote some of the objects of social worship? And the true answer to this question is to be found only in a careful, critical investigation of the writings of the ancient Christians; whose instructive allusions to this subject have been frequently treated as of too slight importance to demand a very precise interpretation, and not seldom also perverted, by prejudiced advocates of certain systems, to the support of foregone conclusions.

It cannot, indeed, be denied, that the diverse sentiments expressed in a few passages of the authentic writings of very early fathers of the church, present some difficulty to one who would thoroughly weigh the testimony and teachings of all ancient Christians, respecting the proper use and due cultivation of music, as a part of public worship, in the church of the new dispensation; and for this reason, if for no other, it is important that the true teaching of the New Testament be made the basis of any answer to the question under consideration.

The plain bearing of the passages cited in the introduction, from the revelation of St. John, in which the glorified servants of the Lord in heaven are represented as "harpers harping with their harps," can hardly be mistaken. It is difficult to conceive upon what grounds imagery thus derived from the usages of public worship under the old dispensation could be employed to represent the condition of saints in the church triumphant, unless similar usages were

allowable and desirable under the new dispensation. This fundamental and irrefragable argument, from the New Testament, for the use of instrumental music in the Christian church, needs no corroboration from any other passage of Holy Scripture. But there is, in St. Paul's injunction to his fellow Christians to "speak to themselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their heart to the Lord,"* an important expression, which is not fully rendered by the phraseology of our English translation, according to the common understanding of the phrase, "making melody." The Greek term, which is rendered by these words, is ψάλλοντες, *psallontes*. It literally signifies, in its primary and specific meaning, *playing upon the psaltery*, or some similar instrument of strings. This remark is fully justified by the uniform current of ancient usage, not only in the Greek language, but also in the Latin, to which the term *psallo* was directly transferred from the Greek. The primary and specific application of this term to the music of instruments, or to vocal music accompanied by them, is every where recognized in ancient writings, classical and ecclesiastical; from the Greek of the Alexandrine version of the Old Testament,† and that of the Attic

* Eph. v. 19.

† Of the common use of this word in the Septuagint the following examples are a fair specimen:

"And David took an harp, and played, Gr. ἔψαλλεν, with his hand." 1 Sam. xvi. 23.

"A man who is a cunning player on the harp," ἐιδότα ψάλλειν. v. 16.

tragedians and lyrists, down to the Latin of the middle ages. It is, of course, sanctioned by all lexicographers.* It is also largely insisted on by some of the most learned among the ancient fathers, in their voluminous and beautiful expositions of the book of Psalms.† And as explained by them, it is by no means denied, if even overlooked, by our translators, in their expressive phrase "making melody." Moreover, there is nothing in the language of St. Paul, in any other part of the epistle to the Ephesians, nor in any of his writings, to limit his use of the term ψάλλοντες (*psallontes*) here to its secondary meaning, in which it is, doubtless, sometimes used to denote the singing of psalms without instrumental accompaniment.‡ There could be no error, therefore, in interpreting his language in this clause, ᾄδοντες καὶ ψάλ-

"A man that can play well," ὀρθῶς ψάλλοντα. v. 17.

"Cunning in playing," ἐιδότα ψαλμὸν. v. 18.

* See Steph., Schleusn., Wahl., Donn., Lidd. and Scott et al.

† Augustine, in his discourses on the Psalms, and Jerome and others, expressly apply the Latin word *psallo* with much precision of language, to the *manual* act of playing on a stringed instrument. *Vide Aug. passim.* Prudentius also (De Coron. ix. 838) employs the classical phrase "*docta psallere;*" probably to denote one skilled in playing on such an instrument; even though this phrase, as used by Horace and Sallust, might well have been almost repulsive to a Christian poet.

‡ It is natural to suppose it thus limited in 1 Cor. xiv. 15, and perhaps in Jas. v. 13. But often when this word is used by Latin or Greek fathers in its secondary sense, to denote singing without an instrument, its primary meaning is expressly recognized under the significant idea that the tongue, like the *plectrum* or bow of a stringed instrument, *strikes upon* the other organs of the human voice. Prud. De Coron. v. 312, 315; ix. 6. Chrys. Ps. xli. xlii. et al.

λοντες ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν τῷ κυρίῳ, by these words, *singing and playing heartily unto the Lord:* even upon the supposition, that the Christians of that period, constantly liable as they were to persecution and oppression, rarely had opportunity to introduce instrumental music into their public worship.

This criticism is necessary to a true and safe view of some sentiments expressed by the earliest of those fathers whose writings contain allusions to the music of the primitive church. Especially is it important with reference to a certain spurious passage sometimes ascribed to Justin Martyr, who lived but a short time after St. John. His authentic writings are often justly cited to show what importance the primitive Christians attached to the sacred exercise of singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. But the passage now referred to expresses under his name, in some editions of his works, sentiments which are at first view quite unfavorable to the advocates of instrumental music. It is in these terms:

"To sing simply is not fit for children, but to sing with instruments, and with dancing, and with cymbals or rattles. Wherefore in the churches the use of such instruments,* and of others which are fit for children, is taken away from the sacred songs, and simple singing is left."†

If this were indeed the language of Justin Martyr, it might be easily reconciled with that of St. Paul and St. John, in their plain allusions to the *psaltery*

* τῶν τοιούντων ὀργανῶν.

† Quest., p. 462, Ed. Colon. 1686.

and *harp*, for a description of what is fit for the use of Christians, and illustrative of the pure and perfect worship of saints in heaven; and therefore not peculiar to the *childhood* of the church under the old dispensation of bondage. It might still be shown, from some expressions in the passage, that, whoever was its author, he did not lay an objection absolutely against all instruments. He speaks first of singing "with instruments and with dancing, and cymbals and castanets, or rattles." He then says that "the use of *such* instruments and of others which are fit for children was taken away from the sacred songs of the church, and simple singing was left." And when it is considered that in ancient times, the use of the harp or lyre, a simple instrument called the *cithara* or *kithara*, somewhat similar to the *guitar*, was intimately connected with all singing performed under circumstances of leisure, the phrase "simple singing," as used in the passage in question, cannot be safely taken to imply an absolute prohibition of the music of such instruments in the religious worship of Christians. Whatever, therefore, may have been the origin of this apparent objection to instrumental music in the Christian church, it is, in the most unfavorable aspect, easily obviated. And this explanation of it is confirmed by the important testimony of Clement of Alexandria, whose language, in some remarkable passages, deserves particular consideration.

This father lived in the latter part of the second century. He was author of several very important passages, which have been often cited, in favor of

instrumental music in Christian worship. Yet he also expresses disapprobation of certain instruments, which were in that age abused by the heathen to purposes of sensuality and licentiousness, and to the ensnaring of unstable Christians. Thus he complains that "some like polypi, which they say are assimilated in color to the stones to which they cling, laying aside the devotion which they put on in church, after their departure thence, become assimilated to the multitude with whom they are conversant; and abroad are beside themselves with ungodly sounds, and amorous ditties; being filled with the music of pipes and cymbals, and with drunkenness, and every thing base. And after this manner, singing first one way and then another, those who before in their hymns celebrated immortality, finally, being evil, wickedly make in their very music, a recantation unto perdition."*

Here it is important to remark, once for all, that upon this subject many writers have, in various instances, cited very erroneous or imperfect versions of passages from the fathers, apparently without examining the original at all; often giving no reference to the passages, even at second hand, and rarely repeating them in Greek or Latin. Thus the passage

* Paed. L. III., c. 11, p. 256. Ed. Sylburg. 1629.

Hawkins, in his Preliminary Discourse, seems rather to disapprove of the censures uttered by Clement and others of the ancient fathers against certain instruments. But afterwards, when he comes to describe such instruments, and has occasion to cite what some heathen poets have said of their nature, design and use, he says, "It appears that the censure of Clement was well-grounded." Vol. I., p. 248.

just cited has been given, by some writers of high reputation, in a form which renders its testimony very ambiguous, if not quite unfavorable to musical instruments generally.* And yet Clement, in the very same book and chapter, reproving an ostentatious display of rings on the fingers, had expressly allowed to Christians, among other significant seals, or emblems, such as the dove, fish, ship and anchor, the *lyre* of Polycrates.†

In another place he represents Christians as no longer worshipping God with various instruments of music which were used in war, such as the trumpet and drum, and cymbal, and fife. But at the same time he says of Christian music, "This is our acceptable festivity. And if you wish to sing to the cithara or lyre, and to play the psaltery, that is not censurable. You will imitate the righteous Hebrew king, who was acceptable to God. Rejoice, ye righteous, in the Lord; for praise becometh the just; saith the prophecy. Praise ye the Lord on the cithara, and play to him on the psaltery with ten strings."‡

Nor is the objection which the learned Suicer§ makes to the last part of this passage, on account of its apparent contradiction of the first part, a valid objection, in any respect. To sustain it, he is obliged to bring in the rationalistic suggestion of Procopius,

* Burney, and Latrobe after him, p. 43.

† Paed. Clem., p. 246.

‡ Paedag., II., 4, pp. 164, 165.

§ Thesaur. Eccles., v. ὄργανον.

that the use of instruments in the Jewish church was not a divine appointment, but an invention of king David! Under such circumstances, others who may find any troublesome discrepancies in the teachings of Clement upon this subject, must surely be at liberty to adopt such of his assertions as may seem to them most agreeable to the general tenor of Holy Writ.

But the force of one of the most interesting among the very numerous allusions of Clement to the music of the primitive church has been generally lost through a mistranslation; which has been handed along in a very remarkable manner, from one modern writer to another. The passage here referred to is commonly given in these words:* "This is the chosen mountain of the Lord, unlike Cithaeron, which has furnished subjects to tragedy; it is dedicated to truth: a mountain of greater purity, overspread with chaste shades. It is inhabited by the daughters of God, the fair lambs who celebrate together the venerable orgies, collecting the chosen choir. The singers are hòly men, their song is the hymn of the Almighty King; virgins chant, angels glorify, prophets discourse, while music sweetly sounding is heard."† Nor is the general tenor of this version very exceptionable. But the Greek word here translated "chant" is the same which has been already noted as a word very often misconstrued. It signifies, in its primary specific sense, to play upon, or at

* Higgins, 203, and Smith, 67, who depends on Burney.

† Admonitio ad Gent., p. 74.

least to sing to, the psaltery or the lyre. And as in the passage from the epistle to the Ephesians already considered, so in this, there is nothing which requires that a more limited meaning be adopted. Much less is there any thing in the original language of Clement, which restricts it to the peculiar species designated by the English word *chant*. Moreover, the clause, "music sweetly sounding is heard," when translated literally, reads thus: "the sound of music is sent forth." And this manifestly implies the possibility and propriety of instrumental music, as a part of the Christian exercises described by Clement in this remarkable passage.

That the meaning of Clement in this passage is not misrepresented by this criticism may be proved most conclusively by his own use of the word ψάλλει, *psallei*, in another place, which has been rarely, if ever, referred to by modern writers on music. In the beginning of his Admonition to the Gentiles, having, at much length, and with great precision and judgment, compared the divine work of creation to that of a composer and performer of music, he says: "And He, who was of David, and before him, the Word of God, overlooking the lyre and cithara, inanimate instruments, and preparing this world, and also that little world, man, and his soul and body, with the Holy Spirit, *makes melody** to God with *the instrument of many notes*,† and sings‡ to this instrument, man: Thou art my harp, and pipe, and temple; harp, on account of harmony; pipe, on account

* ψάλλει. † τοῦ πολυφώνου ὀργάνου. ‡ προσάδει.

of spirit; temple, on account of speech: that the first, indeed, may strike out,* the second breathe forth praise; and the last accept the Lord."† And in the same place he says again: "The Lord made man a beautiful and breathing instrument, according to His own image."

The next of the early fathers worthy of notice here is Eusebius, who flourished at the end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth. His writings abound in very instructive allusions to the subject of music, viewed in various aspects. And some of his incidental illustrations of other subjects by significant references to this, afford important testimony respecting the state of music among the primitive Christians.

Like Clement, in the passages last considered, he puts upon instrumental music the highest honor of which any human art is capable; representing the works of creation under the figure of a great musical instrument, upon which the Almighty Creator makes melody. Thus, in his Praises of Constantine,‡ he uses this comparison to illustrate the Divine wisdom and power. Speaking of God, he says:

"And having constructed for himself this all-harmonious instrument, he played upon the irrational, shapeless, and confused substance of bodies, with a most wise and rational faculty; well fitting

* κρέκῃ. † Admon. ad Gent., p. 4.
‡ P. 637. Ed. Vales. 1659.

the *disjuncts* to the *diatones*."* "Indeed, this sensible world,—as a lyre of many strings, consisting of diverse chords, both high and deep, also slack and strained, and midway between the two, but all well arranged, according to the art of music,—after the same manner this world, being of many parts, and very complex; of cold and its contrary heat together; and again of a moist substance, and its contrary a dry one; coming into one harmony, becomes the instrument and great workmanship of the great God; and the Divine word, not consisting of parts, nor made up of contraries, but being without parts, and uncompounded, doth well and wisely play upon the universe,† to his Father the King of all; rendering melody which is appropriate and becoming to Him."‡

And while thus indirectly attesting the tendency of Christianity to elevate and advance the noble art of music, Eusebius also gives an important view of the care that was taken, and the arrangements that were made, in an early age of the church, for securing a proper application of this art to the services of public worship. Describing those services, he says: "There was one influence of the Divine Spirit pervading all the members; all were of one mind, and of the same zeal in the faith; and all had one hymn of divine themes. Moreover, the rites of the

* These terms of ancient music cannot be well translated by any modern terms.

† *το πᾶν ἀνακρόυεται.*

‡ *την ὀφειλομένην καὶ αὐτῳ πρέπουσην ἀποδιδοὺς μελωδίαν.*

bishops were exact, and the ministrations of the priests; and the institutions of the church were acceptable to God. Here might be heard the psalmody, and the rest of the sounds* given to us of God; and here the performance of the divine and mystical ministries."† He says, also, in the same place, that persons of every age and of both sexes, magnified the Lord with all their heart in praises and thanksgivings.

But as in one or two of the passages cited from Clement, so in these from Eusebius, some care is requisite to grasp the whole meaning of the significant and comprehensive expressions by which the music of the ancient Christians is described. It would be an error to suppose that the words here translated as literally as possible in English idiom by the declaration, "Here might be heard the psalmody and the rest of the sounds given to us of God,"‡ may not be safely taken to include instrumental music. For Basil, who was partly contemporaneous with Eusebius, says expressly, that "*psalm* is a musical word, denoting what is elegantly struck upon an instrument, according to the rules of music."§ And Gregory Nyssen, the contemporary of Basil, gives a corresponding definition of this word‖ as Gregory Nazianzen of the same

* *φωνῶν.*

† Hist., L. X., c. 3.

‡ *Ὧδε μὲν ψαλμωδιαῖς καὶ ταῖς λοιπαῖς τῶν θεόθεν ἡμιν παραδόθεισων φωνῶν ἀκροάσεσιν.*

§ Bas. on Ps. xxix.

‖ Tractat. in Psalmos, L. II., c. 3.

age does also of the term *psalmody.** Yet most translators of Eusebius, overlooking an important part of the full signification of this term, and failing to advert to the unquestionable fact, that the Greek word *φωνη, pho-ne,* is applied, by classical as well as ecclesiastical writers, not merely to the voice, but to various sounds, especially those of music, and to its notes,† have too much restricted the learned historian's description of the music of ancient Christianity.

Of the most prominent of the Greek fathers, it is only necessary here to consult further Chrysostom; who was a presbyter of Antioch and Bishop of Constantinople, in the latter part of the fourth century. The golden-mouthed master of pastoral eloquence very forcibly expresses his sense of the importance of sacred music in this description of the essentials of a Church. "Where there is a psalm, and prayer, and a company of prophets, and a pious mind in

* Greg. Naz. Carm. Op., Vol. II., p. 200. Paris, 1530.

† Chrysostom, in a single short sentence, applies *φωνὴ* and another word nearly synonymous, to the sound, note and tune of a musical instrument, thus: "Harpers, taking the fingers of their pupils, apply them by degrees to the *tones* (*φθόγγοις*), and teaching them to feel their way by practice, instruct them to prepare from the *tuneless sounds* (*ἀφώνων φθόγγων*), and from strings of *every note* (*πάσης φωνῆς*) a more sweet and pleasant *tune* (*φωνὴν*)."—*Serm. De Dec. Mill. Tal.*, Vol. III., p. 2. Ed. Montf. Ven. 1734.

A similar use of the same words is found in 1 Cor. xiv. 7, 8, 10. The learned Stephens in his Lexicon says, "As *vox* is by the Latins applied to birds and some beasts, so is *φωνὴ* sometimes among the Greeks applied to musical instruments." He might have added hat the Latin word is not less comprehensive.

those who sing, no one will err, who calls such a congregation a church."* He also speaks of instrumental music thus: "Those who call in David with the harp call in Christ by him."† Another Greek writer, perhaps equally ancient,‡ in a discourse long considered by many critics the work of Chrysostom, negatively maintaining the propriety of instrumental music, with particular reference to the views of some who censured and were ready to prohibit the cithara, as an instrument abused by the heathen to worldly uses, speaks thus: "The cultivation of this art should not have been blamed, if it made known the Lord;" and "the cithara should not have been blamed, if God were proclaimed by its strains;" with more to the same purpose. Thus was laid down quite early a grand principle, of easy application to the great ecclesiastical instrument of modern times, the noble organ, which is not susceptible of any extensive perversion to worldly uses. And it is worthy of remark, that even the diligent Suicer, in his earnest effort to turn against instrumental music all discrepancies and apparent contradictions in any writings of the fathers, could make nothing to his purpose out of Chrysostom, without citing from an inferior edition a passage of questionable authority, in the judgment of the learned critic himself.§ The other passages which he cites are really of no avail

* Chrys. on Ps. xli. † Id.

‡ The admonition prefixed to the Sermon "de Dicto Abrahami," in Montfaucon's edition, has these words: "It is an ancient work, and savors of the times of Chrysostom."

§ Thesaurus Eccles., verb. *ὄργανον*.

for his purpose. The first proves too much by far. And the second is, upon the whole, a direct and forcible illustration of the propriety and importance of instrumental music, in Christian as well as in Jewish worship. Both are worthy of a prominent place in this exhibition of the views of Chrysostom. The first is in these words:

"Then there were instruments, by which they offered songs of praise. But now instead of instruments the body is to be used. For it is possible to sing not only with the tongue, but also with the eyes, and hands, and feet, and ears. For when each of these does those things which bring glory and praise to God, for instance, when the eye looks not upon unchaste sights, when the hands are not stretched out for rapine, but for almsgiving, when the ears are prepared to receive psalms and spiritual tidings, when the feet run to the Church, when the heart devises not deceits, but teems with love, then the members of the body become a psaltery and a cithara, and sing a new song which consists not of words but of deeds."

Surely, such an illustration of true religion tends very little to the disparagement of instrumental music. Perhaps the learned Suicer himself would not have applied it for such a purpose, if he had not, somehow, strangely overlooked the Greek word ψαλμῶν (*psalmōn*), and omitted it entirely in his Latin version of the passage. For he was well aware of the definition put upon this word by Gregory Nyssen and Basil; who say, as cited by him,* that it

* Thesaurus Eccles., verb. ψαλμὸς. Chrys. Ps. 144 and 150.

signifies a "melody made with a musical instrument,"—"when it is struck with good rhythm, according to harmonical principles."

Nor is the other passage a whit more unfavorable to the use of instruments in the Christian Church. It is this:

"Those instruments were allowed for this reason; both on account of their infirmity, and to arouse them to do with pleasure those things that are profitable, and make them willing, through such inducements, to act with much diligence. For God, perceiving their negligence, and slothfulness, and backsliding, contrived thus wisely to awaken them; mingling with the toil of close attention the pleasure of melody."*

Doubtless, such reasons for the use of musical instruments in religious worship were applicable even to the ancient Christians, as well as to the Jews. That they are applicable to Christians of the present day is very manifest. And that Chrysostom was both zealous and judicious in his efforts for the promotion of sacred music, may well be assumed, in view of his eloquent encomium upon it, suggested by the attractiveness of music in general.

It is not necessary to illustrate in a similar manner the misrepresentations which have been often made of the sentiments of writers of less note, whether among the Greek or the Latin Christians. And this view of the sentiments of the most prominent Greek fathers, may be well concluded by an

* Thesaurus Eccles., verb. *ὄργανον*.

appropriate extract from the encomiastic remarks of Chrysostom:

"Nothing," he says, "so elevates and wings the soul, and withdraws it from the earth, and delivers it from the bonds of the body, and makes it philosophize and contemn the things of life, as a melody in concert, and a divine song composed in rhythm.* For so is our nature pleasantly and happily affected towards songs and melodies, that by them children at the breast, crying and discontented, are lulled to sleep.—Wherefore also travellers often driving their beasts at mid-day, and singing, do this to beguile the labor of the journey by those songs; and not only travellers, but also husbandmen, treading the wine-press, gathering the vintage, pruning the vines, or doing any other work, often sing; and seamen rowing do this, and also women weaving and separating with the shuttle the intermingled warp, often each one by herself, and often all in concert sing one certain melody; and this they do, desiring to beguile the toil of their works with a song; as the soul, if it hear a melody and a song, can more easily bear troublesome and painful things."† In the same strain he goes on to show that divine psalms and spiritual songs were instituted as a part of worship, to cheer and edify devout souls.

This eloquent description of the attractiveness and efficacy of music is only equalled by the similar

* μέλος συμφωνίας, καὶ ῥυθμῷ συγκείμενον θεῖον ᾆσμα—literally, the first clause signifies *music of symphony.*

† Chrys. on Ps. xli.

encomium recorded by the fervid Ambrose, in his engaging description of the Psalms of David, and of the pious use made of them by Christians in the fourth century. And in passing to a suitable view of the new era of ancient music, which is generally supposed to have arisen under the auspices of Ambrose in the church of Milan, it is worth while to remark, according to the testimony of Augustine and others, that some of the improvements thus introduced among the western Christians were brought from Antioch.

A complete view of the influence of Ambrose, as a very efficient promoter of music among the Latin Christians, will be more fitly introduced in the discussion of another topic. But that there was in the devout Archbishop of Milan a genius which yearned after something more definite and more truly refined than the most cultivated of the ancient Greek music, seems manifest from the testimony of Augustine to the excellence of the Ambrosian strains, by which he was so happily affected in the first stages of his penitence. "How much I wept," he says, "in thy hymns and sacred songs; being deeply moved by the tunes of thy sweetly sounding church. Those tunes flowed in at my ears, and thy truth was distilled in my heart; and thence through its power, the love of piety boiled forth, and tears ran down, and it was well with me."* And when the

* The word here translated *tunes* is *voces*. It is used in this sense, according to Ainsworth, by Virg. Aen. VI. 646, in this verse:

"Obloquitur numeris septem discrimina vocum."

character of Augustine, as an earnest promoter of cultivated music is well considered, his testimony to the excellence of that which was introduced at Milan by Ambrose is very important.

Above all others of the ancient Christian writers, therefore, the devoted Bishop of Hippo is worthy of notice, with reference to the actual progress of music, in one of the most eventful periods of its history: some of his most important remarks upon this subject, and some of his records of important facts having been strangely overlooked by many writers; while one of his most instructive testimonies to the value and efficacy of excellent music in the worship of the Christian church has been sadly misconstrued by a very learned divine of modern times.*

Alluding to the incidents just related above, concerning the efficacy of the Ambrosian music, Augustine had spoken of himself, as if he might have been sometimes too susceptible to the influence of sweet sounds, and too fond of good music, for its own sake; without due regard to the sense of the psalms and hymns and spiritual songs of the Church. He then adds: "And sometimes immoderately avoiding this mistake, I err with too much severity; yea,

And that the word *vox* is applied to musical sounds and notes, as well by classical writers as by the ecclesiastical writers of the age of Augustine, and of other times, might be shown by examples almost numberless. It is thus applied to the sounds and notes of musical instruments by Tertullian, Claudian, and Cassiodorus, in passages examined in another part of this volume. See also Aug. De Mus., I., 1, 4. II. 1. De Ord. II. 15 et al., passim.

* Bingham. Eccl. Ant., B. XIV., c. I., § 16.

sometimes so greatly, that I wish all the melody of the sweet songs in which the psaltery of David is used,* were removed from my ears and from the whole church; and that seems to me more safe, which, I remember, was often told me concerning Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, who made the reader of the psalm to sound it with so small a variation of tone, that it was nearer to reciting† than to singing. Nevertheless, when I remember my tears which I shed at the music of thy church, in the first

* The phrase here translated "psaltery of David" has been sometimes rendered "psalter, or psalms of David." But that it denotes an instrument of music would seem sufficiently clear from the most obvious construction of the passage. The Latin is "quibus Davidicum psalterium frequentatur." This view of the passage might be strengthened by many references to the discourses of Augustine on the Psalms. It receives no small corroboration from the language of Cassiodorus, a studious reader and great admirer of Augustine (see Cave's Hist. Lit. on Cass.), where, in a description of musical instruments (Variar., p. 77, 8, Ed. Par. 1583), having said, "Let us speak of the psaltery, *psalterio*, which came down from heaven," he proceeds to speak of the effect of David's playing before Saul as produced by the *lyre of David*, and uses the phrase "*Davidica lyra*;" employing the same epithet which Augustine had applied to the *psalterium*. To this may be added the authority of Facciolati and Forellini. "*Psalmus*, lit. *psalm*, is the sound of the harp or lyre, and what is sung to the lyre. By Christian writers it is used, by *antonomasia*, concerning the sacred hymns, or canticles of king David, because it was the custom to sing them to the psaltery, *psalterium*, which the author himself is said to have made." Hawkins, too, in his History of Music, says, that "Ambrose joined instruments of music to the public service in the church of Milan."—*Hawk.*, I., 399. *Higg.* 160.

† In other places Augustine seems to mean by this word (*pronuncianti*) what we now call *scanning*. De Mus., L. II., c. 1, and L. IV., c. 14.

stages of my recovered faith, even now I am moved, not by the music, but by the subjects of the songs; and when they are sung with a clear voice and a very agreeable modulation, I acknowledge again the great utility of this institution. Thus I waver between the peril of pleasure, and the proof of benefit; but am rather induced, not indeed pronouncing an irrevocable judgment,* to approve the custom of singing in the church; that through the entertainment of the ears, the irresolute mind may rise to love of piety. Yet when it happens that the music affects me more than the subject of the song, I confess that I sin grievously; and then I wish not to hear the singer."† How, in view of what Augustine thus said of the effect of sacred music upon himself, the learned Bingham, and others after him,‡ could so interpret this passage as to make it ascribe mental weakness to those who can be allured by music,§ it is difficult to conceive. And the mistake of such interpreters, moreover, betrays a singular ignorance of the nature of ancient music, which both as an art and as a science, was very intimately connected with literature and philosophy.

In striking accordance with the sentiments of the passage last cited from the confessions of Augustine, are many of his observations in his discourses upon

* Hawkins says that he retracted it, but gives no reference for proof of the assertion.

† Aug. Conf., L. X., c. 33.

‡ Library of Fathers, Pusey, Oxf.

§ The language of Augustine is, "ut per oblectamenta aurium infirmior animus in affectum pietatis assurgat."

the Psalms. And in one of those discourses is to be found the most remarkable observation recorded by any ancient writer on the subject of music. "Those who sing," he says, "whether in harvest, or in the vineyard, or in any engrossing work, when they begin in the words of sacred songs to exult with joy, as if filled with so great joy that they cannot express it in words, turn themselves from the syllables of words, and go into a sound of jubilation. A jubilant sound, indeed, signifies that the heart labors with what it cannot express in words. And whom does such jubilation become, if not the ineffable God? For He is ineffable, whom you cannot describe. And if you cannot describe Him, and may not be silent, what remains, except that you make a joyful noise? So the heart may rejoice without words, and its unspeakable joys must not be confined by syllables."*

Now it cannot well be supposed that one so fond of good music as Augustine, would under any circumstances encourage or tolerate the discordant noise of a mere jumble of notes or sounds, without order and method, or regard to the principles of music. For in a certain place† he goes so far as to compare discord in singing to heresy and schism in doctrine and discipline. His idea, therefore, so earnestly expressed in the passage just cited, seems, above any thing else extant in ancient writings, to have developed, at a period comparatively remote, the germs of many modern improvements in music; not only of those refinements by which many notes are often ap-

* Aug. on Ps. xxxii., conc. I. † Ps. cxlix.

plied to single syllables by divisions commonly called slurs, but also of "florid counterpoint," or a complicated movement of several melodies, concordant but not wholly coincident, and of the symphonious clash of numerous and various instruments, combined in one loud roar of notes of jubilation. So true is this, that a complete view of the progress of music in the age of Augustine, and of his influence and that of his contemporaries in the promotion of this science, can hardly be taken without some reference to improvements which were consummated at a much later period. Here, therefore, it will be proper to consider briefly the most prominent facts relative to the invention of the organ and its introduction into Christian worship. And an interesting passage in Augustine's exposition of the 150th Psalm affords the best basis to be found in ancient writings for an appropriate view of those facts.

Commenting on the words, "Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs," he says, "Organ is a general name of all musical instruments, although now a custom hath obtained, that those are particularly called organs, which are blown with the bellows; which kind I do not think to be designated here. For since organ is a Greek term, common, as I have said, to all musical instruments, this to which the bellows are added the Greeks call by another name. But that it be called organ is rather the Latin usage, and that common usage is well established. Because therefore he says on strings and organ, he seems to me to have wished to designate some instrument (*organum*) which may have strings."

He then goes on to make a somewhat fanciful but interesting remark respecting the spiritual significancy of the strings of the psaltery, or any similar instrument, "because they were flesh, but are now freed from corruption." But what is most worthy of notice is the fact, that about that time, a word which had before been a general name for all instruments, became a specific term, and began to be applied to a particular instrument, or at least to a particular class of instruments. This simple fact is of great consequence, as respects the date of the invention of a particular instrument of that class. It is far more important than any description of such instruments in detail, under other names; especially when it is considered that Augustine, in other places, speaks of the organ which was blown with the bellows as large,* and implies that it was adapted to accompany singing, and yet also uses the word organ in its general sense, as applicable to all instruments.† Whatever, therefore, may have been the form or structure of the instrument to which the general term organ had just then begun to be specifically applied, there can be no reasonable doubt that the sentiments of the most prominent among the Latin fathers of that

* Mason, as cited by Latrobe, p. 346, reads *slender* instead of *large;* having evidently by mistake substituted *gracile* for *grande.* The latter word is found in the Benedictine edition, and doubtless in most others. For the word *gracile, slender,* could in no way be made distinctive of an organ, large or small, being much more applicable to many other instruments. Ps. lvi., i. e. lvii. of the modern division.

† Ps. xli. lxv. lxix. cxlvi. et al.

age, concerning the use of instrumental music, were such as the elegant Prudentius expressed to this effect:

"Whate'er in hollow brass aloud the crooked trumpet roars,
Whate'er, with deep-drawn blast amain, its clarion voice outpours,
Discant, that gently trills what lyre and modest lute attend,
Concordant notes, which shepherds' pipes of reeds unequal blend,
Re-echoed shrill from rival caves in loud response around,
All Jesus celebrate, all Christ, in full acclaim, resound;
Yea, all things, even mute, attuned by His inspiring name,
In concert with the sacred harp the praise of Christ proclaim."*

In this translation, given to avoid the insertion of a Latin sentence in the body of the argument, the

* Quicquid in aere cavo (*a*) reboans tuba curva remugit,
Quicquid in arcano vomit ingens spiritus haustu,
Quicquid casta chelys, quicquid testudo resultat,
Organa disparibus calamis (*b*) quod consona miscent,
Aemula pastorum quod reddunt vocibus antra, (*c*)
Christum concelebrat, Christum sonat, omnia Christum,
Muta etiam fidibus sanctis animata loquuntur. (*d*)
Apotheosis. Poem. III., vs. 66–72. Valpy's Classics.

(*a*) "Dat signum speculâ Misenus ab altâ
Aere cavo."—*Virg. Aen.* III. 238, 9.

(*b*) Atque ita *disparibus calamis* compagine cerae."—*Ov. Met.* I. 711.

"Sic rustica quondam
Fistula *disparibus* paulatim surgit avenis."—*Id.*, L. VIII., 191, 2.

"*Disparibus septem* compacta *cicutis*
Fistula."—*Virg. Ec.* II. 36, 37.

"*Calamis agrestibus* insonat ille," i. e. Pan.—*Ovid.*, L. XI., 161.

(*c*) "Aut fessus sub opaca revertitur *antra*," i. e Polyphemus.

"Sumptaque arundinibus compacta est fistula centum;
Senserunt toti *pastoria sibila* montes,
Senserunt undae."—*Id.*, L. XIII., 777, 784–6.

(*d*) The Bibliotb. Vet. Patr. Ed. De La Bigne, Paris, 1624, reads *loquantur* and in the preceding line *concelebret* and *sonct*.

word which is rendered by the phrase "shepherds' pipes" literally signifies organs. It is the plural of the Latin word *organum*, which, as Augustine declares, had been at that time applied to the large instrument blown with the bellows. But in view of the strict regard which Prudentius always paid to classical phraseology, so far as it was attainable at that period, his connection of this word with a classical phrase of very definite and uniform signification, would seem to restrict it in this place to the instrument which is commonly described by the term "Pan's pipes." The learned Suicer,* indeed, ascribes to Prudentius a very remarkable description in prose, of an "organ which was so large that a man could hide in it, and gave sounds soothing to the ears and hearts of all, above every other human means;" exciting "an importunate curiosity, whether, perchance, there was any one, within or without, who could pour forth such sweetly flowing harmony." But Suicer gives no reference to the passage in the writings of Prudentius. It seems also to have been overlooked by the most celebrated writers of the history of music. And it is not easily found without a reference. Moreover, its defects, in point of phraseology and perspicuity, in some parts, stamp it as hardly worthy of the Christian Pindar.† Probably

* Thesaur. Eccles., verb. *ὄργανον*.

† In addition to what has been given above in a very literal translation, the passage contains, according to Suicer, the following inelegant and almost unintelligible Latin: "Verum veraciter deprehensum est adore et canore, quòd tum etiam descendit in jubilatione qui ascendit in jubilatione."

an instrument, which might in that age be justly described by some such terms, had been long known among the Greeks, in the form of the *hydraulum*, whatever may have been the actual structure of the very ambiguous machine, to which that name was applied. And the Romans of the age of Ammianus Marcellinus* seem to have realized, to some extent, in the *noisy* water-organs with which their theatres and palaces were furnished, the fable of Polyphemus, with his huge whistle of a hundred pipes instead of seven. A very remarkable description of those instruments was given by Tertullian as early as the beginning of the third century. "Behold," he says, "the prodigious munificence of Archimedes; I mean the hydraulic organ; so many members, so many parts, so many joints, so many channels of notes,† so many contrivances of sound, so many changes of modes, so many ranks of pipes, and all shall be one great whole. And the wind which breathes forth from the racking of the water shall not therefore be separated into parts because it is administered by parts, being whole indeed in substance, but divided in operation."‡

But it is difficult to obtain from this description any very definite idea of the structure and operation of the famous water-organ of the ancients. Probably the description of an organ given in a questionable portion of the writings sometimes ascribed to

* As cited by Gibbon, Decline and Fall, V., p. 276.

† Vocum.

‡ De Anima, p. 273. Ed. Rigalt., Paris, 1675.

Chrysostom,* relates to the same instrument. And it is scarcely less remarkable than that of Tertullian.

But the most notable of all such descriptions of the ancient organ is given in the Greek epigram, ascribed to the emperor Julian. His language literally translated, is this: "I see a new kind of reeds; doubtless they shoot forth uncultivated very quickly from another brazen soil; nor are they agitated by our winds; but a blast springing forth from a leathern cavern goes beneath the well-bored reeds,† under the roots; and a certain brave man,‡ having swift fingers, stands handling the consentient rods§ of the pipes; and they springing gently give out a song." This seems, at first sight, much like a description of the modern organ. But the very similar language of Claudian,‖ at a later period, manifestly relates to the *hydraulum* or water-organ. It is this:

"And he who forcing out loud sounds with a light touch, modulates¶ the numberless notes** of the brazen crop,†† thunders with his finger creeping here and there,‡‡ and with the lever like a beam stirs up to songs the deeply troubled waters."

Since then Augustine, at the same period, said expressly that the organ to which the bellows were added the Greeks called by another name, it would seem that up to that period the bellows may have been connected in some way with the *hydraulum*,

* Serm. de Dicto Abrah.
† εὐτρήτων καλάμων.
‡ ἀνὴρ ἀγέρωχος.
§ κανόνας συμφράδμονας.
‖ Panegyr. Mall. Theod., 316–19.
¶ Modulatur, or moderatur.
** Voces.
†† i. e. of reeds.
‡‡ Erranti digito.

or water-organ of Archimedes and Ctesibius. Nor can any more definite account of an instrument similar to the modern organ be traced higher than the age of Cassiodorus, who, about the middle of the sixth century, wrote thus: "The organ is a kind of tower constructed with divers pipes, from which by the blast of bellows a very full sound is given out; and that a becoming modulation may adorn it, from the interior part it is furnished with certain wooden tongues;* and the fingers of masters skilfully pressing† these, make a very loud and pleasant tune."‡ And from the age of Cassiodorus it is exceedingly difficult to trace with precision the history of the modern organ, previous to the period in which the science of harmony, dependent in a great degree upon the improvement of that instrument, began to be cultivated.

In passing, however, to that important period in the progress of music, it is worth while to take notice of yet another very remarkable passage in the comment of Augustine on the 150th Psalm.

In addition to his singular reason, already given, for the opinion that the Hebrew word translated in some Latin and Greek versions by the term organ, *organo*, denoted an instrument of strings, he says: "Perhaps he [the Psalmist] added the word organ, *organum*, to indicate that the strings should not sound singly, but that they should sound together in a most concordant diversity, as if they were arranged in an organ, *organo*.

* Linguis. † Reprimentes. ‡ Cassiod. on Ps. cl.

For the sacred persons of the Godhead have their consonant, and not discordant, differences, that is, consenting and not disagreeing; as there may be the most pleasant music from sounds diverse, indeed, but not inconsistent."*

This, now, is by far the most definite description of harmony, as distinguished from melody, that can be found in any ancient writings, either of the Greeks or the Latins. It implies not merely a casual occurrence, or an occasional introduction, of the most practicable concords of two principal notes; such as must have taken place frequently in all music, however uncultivated; sometimes even by the unintentional union of the key-note and the fifth, or the fourth above. It refers explicitly to a threefold concord of sounds; such as really constitutes full and complete harmony, in all ordinary strains of modern counterpoint, or music in parts. And with such views of the nature of the most agreeable and perfect music, not only Augustine and his contemporaries, but other zealous Christians also, amid all the impediments of the dark and dreary period between the seventh and the thirteenth century, labored according to their ability and opportunities for the advancement of sacred music; which, requiring at times the union of many voices, of old and young, and men and women, constantly suggested the importance of the best mode of uniting voices of various sounds and widely diverse pitch. Thus at various intervals, during that period, not only on the continent, where Chris-

* Comp. Aug. De Mus., L. VI., fin.

tianity had received a severe shock, as well from its great enemy Mohammedism as from its own internal corruptions and consequent declension, but also in England, among a people previously quite rude and almost barbarous, the efforts of musicians were earnestly directed to the cultivation of harmony, in the form of plain counterpoint, of two or three parts, in concordant and corresponding notes; and also to the invention of a more perfect system for keeping time than was furnished by ancient music. Such a system of musical time, commonly called "the time-table," was invented, according to some writers, in the eleventh century, and perfected, as others assert, in the beginning of the fourteenth.* Finally, in the fifteenth century, the discovery or invention, by an Englishman,† of "florid counterpoint or figurative harmony," consisting of "three or four melodies moving together in consonance," and the admission, preparation and resolution of discords, opened the way, and laid the track, for a very rapid advancement of music, both as a science and as an art. And thus, from the eventful period of the Reformation to the present day, the cultivation of music has formed one of the most remarkable characteristics of Christian civilization.

"Here, then," in the eloquent language of Jones of Nayland, "let all the admirers of the musical art stop awhile to reflect with gratitude and devotion, that the invention of choral harmony in parts arose

* Burney, II., 175. Hawkins, II., 152.

† Dunstable; Burney, Vol. II., 108, 9, 451.

from the Trinitarian worship of the Christian church. It is certain we have no music of that form extant in the world, but such as is Christian; nor do we read of any; and had it not been for the schools of music established and maintained by the Church, I will venture to say, there had, at this day, been none of that excellent music, with which all of us are now charmed, and I hope many of us edified. Look out of Christendom into the kingdoms of China, Tartary, Turkey, and the regions of the southern world, and you will find no music but what is beggarly and barbarous, fit only to amuse the ears of children or savages. Every thing that is great and excellent in this way hath come down to us from the Christian church. Oh, holy and blessed society, which hath thus introduced us to all that we can know and feel of Heaven itself! How shall we celebrate thee, how shall we cultivate and adorn thee, according to what we have derived from thee? Let others be indifferent if they will to our forms of worship; but upon musicians, if they know themselves, religion hath a particular demand; for they would never have been what they are, if God, in His infinite goodness, had not brought us to the improvements of the gospel."*

This true view of the connection of cultivated music, in modern times, with the progress of Christianity, is very forcibly illustrated by the history of the Anglo-Saxon race. Among the means employed for the improvement of the people of England by the zealous Austin in the seventh century,

* Sermon L. Lond. 1829.

and by the pious and enlightened Alfred in the ninth, sacred music was very prominent. And in connection with this interesting fact, the ascription of some of the greatest of modern improvements in music to Englishmen of various periods* is very instructive.

* Bede, Dunstable and De Muris. Hawkins shows, Vol. I., p. 406, that simple counterpoint, of note against note, was practised to a considerable extent in England, in the days of Bede, at the beginning of the eighth century. Burney largely demonstrates, Vol. II., pp. 108, 193, 451, that Dunstable was, in the fifteenth century, a principal promoter of florid counterpoint and kindred improvements. And it appears from Hawkins, Vol. II., p. 140, that John De Muris, who contributed much to the perfection of the time-table, was a native of England. In connection with these facts, it is worth while to remark further, that traces of rude harmony or music in parts have been found by others in the music of the Britons, at an early period. (Burney, Vol. II., p. 108) And for further proof that the people of Northern Europe have long possessed a full share of the elements of good music, there may be noted the suggestion of Giraldus Cambrensis, that "the Britons might have received harmony in its first stages from the Dacians or Norwegians." Hawk., I., 409.

CHAPTER II.

PRESENT STATE OF MUSIC.

For an appropriate discussion, in the next place, of the *present state* of music, it will be most proper to rely mainly upon a general view of its condition in this country and our father-land since the middle of the sixteenth century; the period at which the Guidonian* system of notation now in use may be said to have been settled and established. In a certain sense, the present state of music in general, sacred and secular, embraces its whole condition since that period; in other words, the several stages of the modern system, from the date of its full establishment. And in a still stricter sense, a general view of the present state of *sacred* music may well be carried back to the middle of the sixteenth century; very little improvement having been made hitherto upon the compositions of some of the oldest masters of the reformed Church of Eng-

* So called from its projector, Guido.

land, as respects the chief characteristics of good music for sacred use. This point, therefore, may be most fitly considered in a two-fold comparative view, embracing at once a comparison of sacred music with secular since the Reformation, and also of the sacred music of that period with that of these days.

It is a remarkable fact, worthy of consideration in various points of view, that in the reign of Elizabeth, during the latter part of the sixteenth century, the music of the Church of England was, according to the uniform testimony of writers of every class, quite superior to the secular music of that country, and equal to the music of any other nation. Striking testimony to this fact is recorded by Strype,* where he relates, that when Queen Elizabeth was entertained at Canterbury by Archbishop Parker, the French ambassador, who was in her company, hearing the excellent music in the cathedral, extolled it most highly, declaring that he thought no prince beside in all Europe, not even the Pope, ever heard the like. But lest this remark of a French courtier should be ascribed by any to a characteristic spirit of flattery, it may be added that the testimony of all writers is to the same effect. That of the most celebrated historian of music, the learned Doctor Burney, is peculiarly conclusive; not only upon this point of the excellence of sacred music in England at that period, but upon all the other points embraced in this view of the present state of music.

With manifest prepossessions in favor of secular

* Ann., Vol. II., p. 314.

music,* he makes, in a certain place, the sweeping assertion, that "it seems as if ecclesiastical music was always inferior to secular at any given period; and that the mutilated scales of the eight modes in Canto Fermo had not only injured melody, but that bad harmony had continued in the church long after it had ceased to be tolerated elsewhere."† And yet he gives a voluminous detail of facts which clearly show, and some reflections which expressly admit, that the music of the Church of England was not only superior to the secular music of that country in the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Elizabeth, James I. and Charles I., but also equal to the music of any other country during the period included within those reigns. In the same manner he shows as clearly, though less fully, that secular music was quite inferior to ecclesiastical at certain times in all countries of Europe. And the principal links in the chain of testimony, by which he establishes these points, and entirely overthrows his own unaccountably rash assertion of the universal superiority of secular music, deserve a place in this view of the present state of music.

The important chain of testimony thus prepared with much care by a very diligent and discriminating writer, whose reputation and ability emboldened him sometimes to nod, may be best introduced with a remark by which he illustrates the fact, that "till the Reformation little other music was known or practised than that of the church,‡ "and that among

* Vol. II., p. 6. † Vol. II., p. 166, note. ‡ Vol. II., p. 59.

ecclesiastics the best singer was esteemed the most learned man."*

"It does not appear," he says, "that in the dark ages of ignorance and superstition the Anglo-Saxons, who then possessed the chief part of our island, were more barbarous than the rest of Europe, Italy excepted. Indeed, no works of taste or genius in the polite arts appear to have been produced at this time, in any part of it; and as to music consisting merely of such chants as were applied to the psalms and hymns of the church, it seems to have been practised as much and as successfully in our country as in any other; for since the time that Austin, the first archbishop of Canterbury, and his successor Theodore, the first primate of all England, with his assistant, Adrian the monk, established the Roman chant in England, our Canto Fermo, if we may believe the monkish historians, was cultivated and taught by a number of the most ingenious clergy of the time, who they tell us were well skilled in music."†

This paragraph was written by the learned historian before he made his strange assertion of the universal inferiority of sacred music. But having soon afterwards made it, he yet goes on almost immediately to *prove* again further, that for a considerable period subsequent to the dark ages, in England at least, sacred music was far in advance of secular.

Declaring that he had never been so fortunate as

* Vol. II., p. 62. † Id., p. 68.

to meet with a single tune to an English song or dance, in all the libraries and manuscripts which he had consulted, so ancient as the fourteenth century, he adds: "Musical tracts, indeed, and ecclesiastical chants abound of that and a still higher period; but till the beginning of the fifteenth century all our secular music has perished. However, if we may judge by what has escaped the ravages of time of a later date, the loss of our musical compositions of this period may be supported without much affliction."*

In the same part of his work he shows that in other countries of Europe, the comparison was, if possible, still more favorable to sacred music. This is his language.

"Earlier proofs of correct counterpoint, learned fugue, and ingenious contrivance, can be produced by the Netherlanders, Germans, French and English, than by the natives of Italy; who seem at first to be stimulated to the study of counterpoint in different parts of Italy by the precepts and examples of foreigners."†

"The examples of counterpoint in other countries are entirely confined to church music; and of any other kind, I have been able to find but little either in print or manuscript of higher antiquity than near the middle of the sixteenth century; yet I have not only seen masses in four, five and six parts composed by the natives of England, which are equally ancient with those on the continent, but secular songs

* Vol. II., p. 381, 2. † Id., p. 519.

in our own language, of two and three parts, and in good counterpoint, of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century."*

Lest, however, this last extract should seem, for a moment, about to turn the scale in favor of secular music in England, two others must be given from the same portion of the second volume.

"It is related by Gio. Battista Donado, that the Turks have a limited number of tunes, to which the poets of their country have continued to write verses for many ages; and the vocal music of our own country seems to have been equally circumscribed; for till the last century it seems as if our secular and popular melodies did not greatly exceed those of the Turks."†

"But however inelegant, uncouth and imperfect our lyric compositions may have been, till after the middle of the sixteenth century, our counterpoint and church music arrived at a perfection with respect to art, contrivance and correct harmony, about that time, which at least equalled the best of any other country."‡

Farther testimony to the same effect he gives in these terms:—"There are some excellent compositions by Parsons in the manuscripts of Christ Church College, but we have already exhibited several specimens of church music which do honor to the harmonical skill of our countrymen, if not to their taste."§

* Vol. II., p. 359.
† Id., p. 553.
‡ Id., p. 554.
§ Id., p. 567.

"If the songs in the Fairfax manuscript be excepted, but little of our secular music is preserved; however, there must have been plenty of it, such as it was."*

Such is the substance of the testimony by which the learned Doctor's history, thus far, illustrates—not to corroborate, but utterly to contradict—his hasty assertion, that "it seems as if ecclesiastical music was always inferior at any given time to secular music." Whether he had any better ground for his farther assertion, that "bad harmony continued in the church long after it had ceased to be tolerated elsewhere," is a question which depends mainly upon the testimony subsequently introduced, with regard to a period when secular music, preserved, nurtured, and richly endowed by the vast improvements in sacred music which took place about the middle of the sixteenth century, began to assume the position and character of an independent department in the modern system.

With regard to this period, Dr. Burney asserts, once without any qualification, and again with scarcely less confidence, that "when Queen Elizabeth ascended the throne, a school of counterpoint was formed in England, that was equal at least to that of any other part of Europe."† And in one of the places alluded to, he adds, "We can produce such proofs of great abilities in the compositions of our countrymen, as candid judges must allow to

* Vol. II., p. 567. † Id., p. 583.

abound in every kind of excellence that was then known or expected."*

Again, he says: "Church music was nowhere more successfully cultivated than in England;"† and yet again: "I have been able to find, in all my researches, no choral compositions in other parts of Europe, of equal antiquity, superior to those which have been preserved of Tallis and Bird, the pride of our country, and honor of their profession."‡ "Indeed," he adds, "both must have been great performers on the organ, to have been able to play such of their pieces for that instrument as are still preserved, in which the passages, though awkward to performers who are only accustomed to modern music, must have been suggested by hands that were habituated to the complicated and now almost invincible difficulties of the sixteenth century."§

Immediately afterwards, speaking of certain compositions of Bird, he says, "They are equally grave and solemn with those of Palestrina to the same words, and seem in no respect inferior to the choral works of that great master."‖

He also introduces the testimony of another writer, who says, "I am sure none excel Mr. William Bird, even by the judgment of France and Italy, who are very sparing in their commendations of strangers. His Cantiones Sacræ, also his Gradualia, are mere angelical and divine; yet his Virginella and some others in the first set cannot be mended by the first Italian of them all."¶

* Vol. III., p. 13. † Id., p. 65. ‡ Id., p. 71.
§ Id., p. 83. ‖ Id., p. 84. ¶ Id., p. 93.

This celebrated composer, and others of the same period, though mainly employed in the promotion of Sacred Music, did much for the cultivation and advancement of secular and instrumental. Of their pieces for instruments, Dr. Burney speaks in very strong terms thus:

"If her Majesty was ever able to execute any of the pieces that are preserved in a manuscript that goes under the name of Queen Elizabeth's Virginal Book, she must have been a very great player; as some of those pieces which were composed by Tallis, Bird, Giles, Farnaby, Dr. Bull, and others, are so difficult that it would be hardly possible to find a master in Europe* who would undertake to play one of them at the end of a month's practice."†

But still, according to the clear and decisive testimony of the learned historian, secular music, instrumental as well as vocal, was quite inferior to that of the church. He says:

"The instrumental music of Queen Elizabeth's reign seems to partake of the pedantry and foppery of the times."‡ And again: "Instrumental music [secular] seems as yet to have made but a small progress towards the perfection at which it has since arrived."§ And, "Our secular vocal music, during the first years of Elizabeth's reign, seems to have been much inferior to that of the church."‖

That secular music was equally dependent upon sacred in other parts of Europe, at that period, suffi-

* Vol. III., p. 15. † Burney wrote about 1780.
‡ Vol. III., p. 110. § Id., p. 143. ‖ Id., p. 119.

ciently appears from two or three similar remarks. While "the Cathedral service" of England, "by the diligence of Dr. Tye, Tallis, Bird, Morley, and others, was brought to a pitch of perfection which was hardly surpassed by that of Italy itself,"* "the Italians had but little rhythm or melody in their [secular] music,"† and "the melodies of all the rest of Europe (except England) had no other model than the chants of the church."‡

It is only necessary to observe here upon the remark that the "Cathedral service" of England was *hardly surpassed* "by that of Italy itself," that this comparison leaves out of view the metrical psalmody of the Church of England, which was at that time a very important and much improved part of its music; having been established in an excellent state as early as the reign of Edward the Sixth,§ by the great skill and good judgment of Dr. Tye, who was musical preceptor to that excellent prince,‖ and on the testimony of Dr. Burney, "as great a musician as Europe could then boast."¶

So fully do all the details presented by that diligent investigator prove, with respect to the most important period in the history of modern music, the very reverse of his strange and quite unaccountable assertion. Nor does it receive much better support from what he shows concerning the comparative merits of sacred and secular music during the succeeding reigns of James I. and Charles. I.

* Vol. III., p. 323. † Id., p. 120. ‡ Id., p. 88.
§ Id., p. 8. ‖ Hawkins, Vol. III., p. 250.
¶ Id., p. 11. Hawkins, Vol. III., p. 250.

What is said of the reign of James is very explicit:

"Amidst many dull and worthless secular productions, the church was furnished with some good compositions."*

"The court during this reign seems to have been wholly inattentive to music."†

"All instrumental music but that of the organ seems to have been in a very rude state at this time throughout Europe."‡

And in this connection the continued dependence of secular music upon that of the church, may be very conclusively inferred from the learned historian's remarks in several places, that certain pieces in this reign seem to have been the model of the Italian opera in the ensuing century,§ and that in a certain part of a play "a psalm was sung."‖

Nor was the general state of the case much altered during the reign of Charles the First.

"The productions for the church during this reign were superior to those of any species."¶ A similar passage attests "the superiority of church music over secular at this period in every part of Europe."**

"Where there is no poetry truly lyric, there can be no graceful or symmetric melody; and during the last century there was certainly none which merited that title in any language of Europe."††

* Burney, Vol. III., p. 327. † Id., p. 331.
‡ Id., p. 358. § Id., pp. 344, 6, 7. ‖ Id., p. 332.
¶ Id., p. 363. ** Id., p. 395. †† Id., p. 396.

"There was but little instrumental music of any kind printed during this period.—At a time when all other instrumental music was so easy and simple, as to appear now perfectly artless and insipid, the extreme complication and difficulty of all the music that was composed for the organ and virginal is truly marvellous."*

For some of the purposes of this review, it may well be continued at once so as to include the testimony of a more recent period. In view of the advancement of sacred and secular music respectively, at the establishment of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, it may be safely assumed that the commotions attending that event, and the ecclesiastical arrangements of the subsequent Interregnum, did much less injury to secular music, which was as yet quite rude, than to that of the church, which was in a state of high cultivation. Under such circumstances, decisive testimony to the subsequent dependence of secular music upon that of the church, and the continued superiority of sacred music even after the Restoration is very remarkable. Such testimony may be best introduced with the expressive lamentation of Doctor Burney over his favorite music. "Alas!" he says, "what is the secular music that thirty years have not withered, wrinkled and superannuated?"† Then speaking of the secular songs of the period immediately following the Restoration, he says:

"Among these songs, to the number of near fifty,

* Burney, Vol. III., p. 407. † Id., p. 463.

there is not one air that is either ingenious, graceful, cheerful, or solemn. An insipid languor or vulgar pertness pervades the whole. From Pelham Humphrey, whose church music is so excellent, I own I expected to find originality, or merit of some kind or other; but his songs are quite on a level with the rest."*

He then comprehends the whole period from the reign of Elizabeth to that of James II. under the same description, with the remark, that "in tracing the progress of English music through the reigns of James I., Charles I., the Protectorate, and the chief part of the reign of Charles II., but few secular compositions occurred which could be heartily praised."†

Afterwards, including with the reign of James II. the Revolution and accession of William and Mary, he speaks of the fame of Purcell's songs as "temporary;" and implying their inferiority to his compositions for the church, he says, that "none of the votaries of Lulli," the great master of the French, "would attempt to put his sacred music in comparison with that of Purcell."‡

Finally, in connection with the general remark, that "little music purely instrumental seems to have been composed till the latter end of the 17th century,"§ he says, "The Cavalier Tarquinio Merula, who flourished from 1628 to 1640, has been mentioned among grave composers for the church and

* Burney, Vol. III., p. 467.
† Id., p. 485.
‡ Id., p. 511.
§ Id., p. 532.

madrigalists; but his secular compositions are almost all so tinctured with caprice and buffoonery, as to render them more singular and original than those of any of his contemporaries."*

"The list of great musicians which France produced" (during the same period) "is not numerous;"† and,

"Correlli," one of the most famous of Italian musicians, "in his concertos, availed himself much of the compositions of other masters, particularly of the Masses in which he played at Rome."‡

More testimony to the same effect might be readily obtained from the "General History of Music." But enough has been produced to nullify entirely the rash remark of the author of that instructive work, in his most unseasonable note, at his entrance upon the period to which this testimony relates. And while this is not weakened by any opposing testimony, upon either of the points to which it relates, it is moreover not materially modified by the learned writer's assertion that certain "imperfections were general in the compositions for the church of every author in every language throughout Europe,"§ during a part of the reign of Elizabeth; nor yet by his admission of the Germans to a partial superiority over the English, at a more recent period; where he says, "Of many German composers whose works I have not been able to find, I make no doubt, but that as far as harmony, contrivance, complication,

* Burney, Vol. III., p. 531.
† Id., p. 582.
‡ Id., p. 557.
§ Id., p. 29.

and diligence could carry them, they were superior to all other musicians of the time."*

It would seem but proper to regard it as an oversight on the part of so cautious a writer, that, after such a detail of facts in opposition to the unfounded assertion into which he had been betrayed by a premature opinion, he did not retract the assertion, as well as modify the opinion. Certainly no one, with any pretensions to candor or logic, would presume to maintain an opinion in opposition to such an array of testimony, derived from personal investigation of all the sources of evidence accessible to the most diligent search.

A farther appropriate view of the present state of sacred music is suggested by certain provisions among the laws or rescripts by which the worship of the Church of England was directed immediately after the Reformation. Many parts of the Morning and Evening Prayer and of the Communion Service were appointed to be said or sung. And to facilitate the singing of those parts of the service, as well as the psalms in metre, books for the use of the people were set forth, in the days of Cranmer† as well as in the reign of Elizabeth,‡ containing apt notes wherewithal to sing the chants and psalms.

These facts would seem to indicate a higher degree of proficiency in vocal music, on the part of the people, than is even now to be found in this country.

* Burney, Vol. III., p. 581.

† Smith, p. 281, 2. Burney, Vol. II., p. 578.

‡ Higgins, p. 225. Hawkins, Vol. III., p. 488.

Musical notation has been, in the mean time, much simplified by gradual improvement of the Guidonian system. But certainly books of musical notes would be of little use to most congregations; while probably not one person in four of all the members of choirs, nor one in forty of other persons, can sing by note, so as to read in tune at sight, without the help of an instrument, all ordinary strains of sacred music. It is not improbable, indeed, that the notes set forth in the sixteenth century were afterwards omitted, or abandoned for other tunes, chiefly on account of the general incapacity of the people to make due use of them. But at all events, the comparison thus suggested between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, with reference to the general state of music in both periods, brings out very clearly, in connection with the important facts before detailed, a conclusion which deserves attention, in any view of the present state of sacred music; namely, that it is not now so decidedly superior to secular music, as it was immediately after the establishment of the present system, during the sixteenth century and the greater part of the seventeenth.

Here, therefore, several important questions concerning the causes of the facts, and the tendency of the conclusion, thus stated, naturally suggest themselves. But the discussion of such questions is not consistent with the plan of this essay. It is only necessary here to remark, that with all the advantages which the church enjoys in the possession of large treasures of standard classical music, perfectly adapted to that noble ecclesiastical instrument, the

organ, there is no reason why sacred music should not, with due diligence on the part of those upon whom its advancement depends, maintain its just ascendency over all secular music, both in scientific excellence and general attractiveness. A good organ, such as is really fit to be used in the worship of any intelligent and prosperous congregation, enables three or four persons to produce better music for variety and power and all scientific excellence than can be made by thirty or forty persons with any instruments of secular music.* And the diapasons of such an organ, "if they could speak in articulate words," as has been well said by the eloquent divine already quoted, "would utter any text in the Bible with dignity and reverence." Inferior organs, indeed, are rather an injury than an improvement to the music of the church. But it is an encouraging feature in the present state of sacred music, that much attention is now given, not only by organ-builders, but also by skilful and scientific organists and sensible connoisseurs, to the improvement of organs, in those points in which there is still much room for the exercise of ingenuity and good taste. In some respects, there has been little opportunity for improvement since the latter part of the seventeenth century; two organs, built at that period, for the

* Even the Piano Forte, in which a part of the mechanism of the organ has been applied to an instrument of many strings, is incapable, with all its beauty and power, of producing some of the peculiar effects of the organ; especially that solemn, soothing flow of "linked sweetness long drawn out," on which the advancement of modern harmony has been in a high degree dependent.

Temple church and St. Paul's cathedral, having been to this day unsurpassed in sweetness of tone; according to the testimony of writers,* qualified to affirm, that a single stop, known to be the workmanship of the maker† of those instruments, would be at present almost invaluable. Nor was he without a worthy rival in his day.‡ But in many things pertaining to the mechanism of various parts of an organ and the perfecting of recently invented stops, there is yet room for much application of skill and sound judgment; the office of the latter being sometimes of no small importance, for the purpose of interdicting alterations and additions, which would be very erroneously deemed improvements.

Farther hints respecting the present state of music will suggest themselves in the consideration of a kindred topic; the *true standard of modern music.*

* Higgins, p. 235. Burney, Vol. III., pp. 409, 440.
† Father Smith. ‡ Harris.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRUE STANDARD OF MODERN MUSIC.

To determine the true standard of modern music, due regard must be had to the analogy that may be traced between this and others of the liberal and fine arts; for example, rhetoric, painting, and sculpture; and also to its intimate connection with poetry. Especially must the grand principles of rhetoric be kept in view, for the basis of good taste in sacred music.

It is a very common opinion, that the only object of vocal music is to give effect to words sung, and thus to add force to human speech in one or other of the languages of mankind. In truth, however, music is, by itself, a perfect science, and an independent art; and has a language peculiar to itself, considered without regard to any form of speech: not merely its nomenclature as a science, and its vocabulary as an art; but its own peculiar means of expressing sentiments and emotions, and of associating and combining ideas. And it is with reference to this characteristic, that music may be well compared

with rhetoric, for a true view of the principles of good taste, which are common to both.

It is difficult so to trace this comparison as to render it perfectly clear to persons unacquainted with the general principles of musical composition. And one of the most eminent of writers upon the "nature and principles of taste" has given a very erroneous description of the analogy between rhetoric and music, while confessedly "speaking with great diffidence of an art of which he had no theoretical knowledge."* But the mistake of the eloquent prebendary of Sarum upon this point may be turned to good account for the purpose now in hand.

"What thought is," he says, "to the arrangement of words, the key, or the fundamental tone is to the arrangement of sounds; and as the one constitutes a whole in language, by establishing a certain and definite idea, to which all the words in a sentence bear a relation, so the other constitutes a whole in music, by establishing a definite and leading sound, to which all the other sounds in the series bear a similar relation."†

This, now, is a very inaccurate statement of the fundamental analogy between rhetoric and music. It is true, that the arrangement of words in a sentence depends somewhat upon the thought of the writer or speaker; or a certain and definite idea, to which all the words in the sentence bear a relation. It is also true, that the arrangement of notes in a

* Alison on Taste, p. 155. New-York, 1844.
† Id., .157.

strain of music depends somewhat upon the key-note, to which, of course all the others bear a relation. But it is not proper, on this account, to represent the key-note as analogous to thought. There is thought in music, as well as in language; and in every strain or passage of good music a certain and definite idea, to which all the notes bear a relation; just as truly as all the words in a well constructed sentence bear a relation to the thought which they express. But the thought expressed in a strain of music is not the key-note of the passage. Nor does the thought or idea of any passage of music ever depend upon the key-note. It is, indeed, somewhat affected by the general distinction between the major and the minor modes; as respectively adapted, in their ordinary effects, to jubilant and plaintive strains. Musical thought, however, does not, in any case, depend upon a single note or tone, but upon combinations or phrases of notes; even as in language, the thought expressed by a writer or speaker depends not upon any single word, but upon the several words and phrases which make up a sentence. Moreover, the combinations of notes, in phrases and strains, like the combinations of words in clauses and sentences, are illimitable and exhaustless. They may, therefore, be varied interminably, even without any change of the key-note. And on the other hand, the thought or idea of a particular strain of music may be, to a certain extent, expressed with various key-notes. So far, then, as any analogy can be traced between rhetoric and music in such a point of view, the key-note or fundamental tone is not to

be compared to the leading thought of a sentence, but to the most essential word or phrase in the sentence; the word or phrase without which it would be ungrammatical, or incomplete. This analogy was, indeed, very near to the mind of Prebendary Alison, when he wrote this sentence. "Although every word in language is significant, and there is a necessary relation among words established by the rules of grammar, yet it is obviously possible to arrange words, according to grammatical rules, which yet shall possess no meaning."* But having no theoretical knowledge of music, he erred entirely in his attempt to apply to this subject his truly excellent ideas of the principles of rhetoric. "In the same manner," he adds, "a series of sounds may be composed, according to their individual relations, which yet may possess no general relation, and from which, as we can discover no end, we can derive no pleasure." Had he said, as he might have done, that a series of sounds may be composed, which possessing, besides their individual relations to each other, a general relation to the key-note, established by the rules of musical grammar, shall yet have no meaning as music, he would not have proceeded immediately afterwards with the erroneous statement which suggested this criticism.

These remarks will suffice to point out the more important analogy which may be traced between rhetoric and music, with reference to principles and rules of good taste. It may be further defined by a

* Essays on Taste, p. 156.

brief comparison, in particulars. In rhetoric, true beauty and real sublimity of style, and genuine pathos, depend more upon entire simplicity and perfect unity, than upon any other qualities. And to an equal degree in music, neglect of unity and departure from simplicity tend to destroy or hinder the most important effects of any flow of sweet sounds, whether expressed in mere melody or in full harmony.

The distinction which is observed between these words, as terms of musical science, at the present day, has been already recognized. But it needs to be stated here more fully. The word *melody* signifies a strain of music which consists of a succession of single notes. And the term *harmony* is applied to combinations of different notes, sounding together in concord. A single note, not succeeded by another, does not, in any sense, constitute a melody. But a combination of two, three or more notes, sounded together in concord, is harmony. This, therefore, may be said, in some sense, to exist anterior to melody; since many single sounds, such as the tone of a heavy bell, and that of a good harp-string, include three concordant notes. The term harmony, however, in the strictness of its technical meaning, signifies a succession of combinations of concordant notes; and thus, in fact presupposes the existence of several melodies, moving together in consonance. Nevertheless, good harmony is the real source of true melody; which is defined by eminent masters of music, to be "a succession of sounds at harmonic distances, and only one of the accidents or forms of harmony, and always dependent, for its excellence

and beauty, on the order of chords through which it is made to pass, or in other words, on the correctness of the harmony by which it is generated."* And if by correct harmony we understand that which is not only conformable to the rules of musical grammar, but also truly significant, and expressive of sentiment, or effective for some of the purposes of music, as a source of pleasure, an object of cultivated taste, and a means of social refinement and Christian civilization and devotion, such a definition is complete, and very important.

This explanation is necessary, at the outset of any discussion concerning the proper style of any modern music: in order to guard against an erroneous impression which is very common; the unfounded idea, that the important qualities of simplicity and unity are more likely to be secured in mere melody, or music in one part, than in full harmony, or music in several parts. There could hardly be a greater mistake than this. The very reverse is the truth. Genuine, close, full and rich harmony, such as can only be produced by masters of the science of music, is the real source and security of unity and true simplicity. And mere melody, on the other hand, or a succession of solitary notes, following each other in a single part, and not subjected to strict scrutiny as respects the harmony, good or bad, which they nevertheless represent and imply, may ramble and roam in a manner utterly inconsistent with every idea of simplicity, and of that unity of a

* Gardiner, p. 368.

grand whole, which is scarcely less essential to true beauty than to real sublimity, in such things as may partake of the sublime. Nor can these observations respecting the foundation of good style in music be disparaged in the least, by any testimony derived from the universal and deserved popularity of certain standard melodies found in a few favorite airs, which are often sung as mere melodies, not only in secular but in sacred music. Such melodies are, in truth, as entirely dependent upon the grand principles of harmony for all their beauty, as any sublime expression in language is, for its power, upon a universal sense of some great truths in nature, which in their essential unity and consequent simplicity, are alike manifest to every intelligent mind.

The leading principle of these remarks may be fitly illustrated farther by a brief reference to particulars in the arts of sculpture and painting. In sculpture, beauty does not consist in single, solitary lines, whatever be their course. Nor yet does simplicity itself consist in the unentangled variations of a single line, which the eye must follow around from point to point, in order to perceive its bearings and relations. But unity, simplicity and true beauty, in sculpture, depend upon a fitting combination of various lines, and an harmonious development of the several parts, especially the contiguous points of a complete figure, of whatever form. The same remark may be applied, and if possible with greater force, to the art of Painting. This art, however, affords a still clearer illustration of the value of full harmony in music. The beauty of a finished pic-

ture consists largely in a suitable variety of colors; fitly proportioned and duly blended. In like manner does a finished piece of music, a composition designed to produce the highest effects of which music is capable, require a due employment of the nicer shades and colors of sound, which are produced by the appropriate introduction of the delicate intervals of semitones, technically termed *accidentals*. Such gradual variations of tone, when they occur frequently, constitute musical phrases, which are called, with a more strict reference to their effect, than was implied in the original application of the term to a certain genus of ancient music, *chromatic*, or colored passages. And in point of fact, there is hardly a good piece of harmony in three or four parts, which is not somewhat colored by such chromatic changes. But it is manifestly quite possible to give, by means of these and other embellishments, an excessive glare of ornament to music designed for sacred use.*

There is yet another point to be considered in this inquiry for the true standard of style in modern music; namely *the intimate connection of music*

* What Clement of Alexandria says, Paedag., L. II., c. 4, against *chromatic* music is not fairly applicable to chromatic passages in modern music. This term anciently denoted a genus of music entirely distinct and separate from that to which the term *diatonic* was applied. But in modern music there is but one genus, the diatonic; with which passages slightly corresponding to those of the ancient chromatic genus have been incorporated, to meet the necessities or demands of modern harmony. It is, however, to be observed, that very ancient music of the Greek church has been styled by some writers χρωματιζόμενον, *chromatized*; and by others *Canto Soave e Figurato*. Hawkins, Vol. IV., p. 112.

with poetry. Through the imperfection of the science of music, previous to the discovery or invention of florid counterpoint or figurative harmony, the practice of music in ancient times, and in modern nations also, down to the period of the Reformation, or at least to the date of its incipiency under Wickliffe, was in some degree peculiar to bards and minstrels; who used to accompany their effusions of rhythmical sentences, in various poetical forms, with strains of simple melody and rude harmony upon the harp or lyre; music similar to that now made by imperfect performers upon the *guitar.* The principal exception to this remark is found in the music of the ancient Jews and the primitive Christians. Doubtless many of their "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" were written in prose or in poetical language, which, like that of the Hebrew Scriptures, was not strictly metrical;* but rendered poetical

* No opinion is here expressed respecting such views of the metrical character of Hebrew poetry as are maintained in the writings of Jerome, and by the Benedictine editors of his works, and many other learned writers. It may be a safe assertion of Bp. Jebb, that the technicality of Hebrew poetry, which abundantly distinguishes it from simple prose, is altogether different from the prosodical technicality of the classics. Sacr. Literature, IV., p. 17. Lond. 1828. But the same cannot be said of the argument which the learned Bishop derives from "the agreeable melody of a song in English prose in the Messiah of Handel," or from "the grand and sublime harmony of one of Kent's anthems," to prove that "the cadence of a well modulated prose would fully answer to render the poetry of the Hebrews, supposing it entirely destitute of metre, sufficiently harmonious to be grateful to the ear in recitation, and suitable to musical accompaniment." p. 21. This argument betrays, at the least, a singular inadvertence, with respect to a certain deficiency in all ancient music; a

in part by other circumstances of correspondence, connection and relation than those of measured time and similar division and arrangement of syllables; namely, the correspondence of parallelism and contrast, in sentiment. Even the Hebrew poetry, however, as well as those hymns and canticles of the ancient Christians which were written in Greek and Latin prose, probably partook in a considerable degree of the rhythmical movement which Cicero, by implication, ascribes to classical prose in the Latin tongue, when he says that much of Iambic metre was scarcely superior to it in rhythm.*

But the intimate connection of music with poetry does not consist merely in the fitness of melodious sounds to give force to measured or rhythmical language. Rhythm is also an essential constituent of perfect music, considered without any regard to speech. It is not, indeed, so essential to all music, as to justify the remark of Mr. Alison, that "the most pleasing succession of sounds, without the preservation of that regularity or uniformity which is commonly called time, every one knows is positively displeasing."† Such an idea is readily confuted by the universal attractiveness of the Æolian harp; which, being entirely dependent for the continuance of its various strains upon the irregular breeze of the atmosphere, is utterly destitute of all rhythmical

deficiency which, as an undeniable fact, is admitted by the most ardent admirers of such music, and supplied by the modern invention of the time-table and other improvements in musical notation.

* Orator, 55.

† Essays on Taste, p. 157.

succession of sounds. It is also sufficiently disproved by the partial neglect of rhythm in modern chanting, especially in the English language; and by the fact, that the most effective organists and tasteful performers upon the violin, the French horn, the bugle and the flute, often manifest in their best efforts to satisfy the ear and the heart of true lovers of music, an utter disregard of rhythm, as consisting in a continual repetition of measured phrases, limited by the exact vibrations of a pendulum. Above all, it is utterly refuted by the least consideration of the manner in which rhythm was observed in the vocal music of the ancients; not being regulated by such mathematical relations or proportions of notes as are settled by the time-table of modern music, and marked with bars, and measured with a constant beat, during a certain period; but wholly dependent on the measure of prosody, and the succession of feet in poetry; insomuch that in some kinds of verse such different movements of sound, as are now designated by the terms common time and triple time, often occurred in alternate, and sometimes in irregular succession in a single verse or line.* According to this view of the partial degree in which true rhythm obtained in ancient music, it is difficult to perceive how the Greeks came by the familiar maxim, that "with musicians rhythm is every thing,"† and how so ancient a writer as Aristides Quintilianus could give a very perfect definition of rhythm, as "a sys-

* Lond. Encycl., P. XXIX., p. 273.

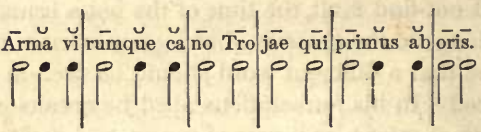
† *το πᾶν παρὰ μουσικοῖς ὁ ρυθμὸς.*

tem of times joined together according to a certain order."* But this view of this important point is generally admitted even by the most decided admirers of ancient music.

It has been already hinted, indeed, that so early as the fourth century, or the beginning of the fifth, in the days of Augustine, the principles of time in music had begun to hold a place, at least in the mind of that writer, independently of the rhythm of poetry and the prosody of grammar. With a strict regard to the rules of grammarians and the authority of poets, and esteeming the violation of prosody a barbarism, and any transgression of the laws of rhythm and metre offensive, he yet asserts, that if one should, in music, when the time of two long syllables is required, use a word of one long and one short syllable, and prolong the latter, a musician would not find fault, the time of the notes being such as belongs to the measure, but a grammarian would require that a different word should be used in such a place.† In his retractations also‡ he speaks of the rhythm of music, as a part of music, and seems thus to imply that it might be distinguished from the rhythm of poetry. And again, in his treatise on music he marks a distinction between trochaic and iambic rhythms, as to the manner of beating their times; showing that while the trochee, or foot of one long and one short syllable, and the iambus, of one short syllable and one long, differed from each other, as to their *ictus* or emphatic beat, yet the tribach of

* Rees's Cyclop. † De Musica, L. II., c. 1. ‡ L. I., c. 6.

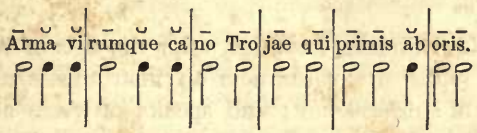
three short syllables, was alike conformable in this respect to the trochee and the iambus; and thus implying the independence of musical rhythm in some degree."* While, therefore, he recognized the ancient and accustomed connection of music and poetry, he at the same time anticipated their mutual independence, and illustrated it by an interesting example, in a verse of Latin poetry, which for the purpose to which it was thus applied, may be made intelligible to readers unacquainted with the Latin language. It is the first verse of the Æneid of Virgil. This verse, without any regard to its meaning, may be plainly represented, in its rhythm, as a line of Latin Hexameter, with proper musical notes for long and short syllables, as well as with the usual grammatical or rhetorical signs, in this manner:



Augustine introduces a teacher,† changing the word prīmŭs in the last foot but one to prīmīs, and yet pronouncing the verse in the same time or measure, as if the word were still prīmŭs. The pupil being satisfied with the rhythm of the verse thus recited, the teacher reminds him, that such a pronunciation of the word prīmīs, in which by the rules of prosody, and the authority or usage of poets, both

* L. II., c. 14. † Id., c. 1.

syllables are long, is a barbarism. He then repeats the line, thus changed, giving to the word prīmīs the due quantity of each syllable. The result is, that the verse is vitiated, the rhythm of the line is destroyed, and it becomes as offensive to the ear of the pupil as the following representation is to the eye of a grammarian or a musician.



Here the last foot but one is too long, having one short syllable redundant, represented by a superfluous note in the musical diagram. And the poetry and the music are alike faulty.

A more complete illustration of the mutual independence of music and poetry as distinct arts, notwithstanding their accustomed and intimate connection in ancient times, could hardly be given. To what extent the independence of music was recognized among the ancients by the use of instruments without any addition of words sung, and whether such instrumental music as they may have had, without the help of syllables regulated by the rules of prosody, ever rose above a very simple accompaniment to the motions of marching and dancing, for which very rude and uncultivated music suffices and is most fit, are questions which it is now utterly impossible to determine. It would seem, indeed, that in the age of Augustine, as doubtless also before that

period, there were complete and regular tunes or strains composed for pipes or flutes. For he says, in a certain place, that "cymbals and drums are struck in symphoniac feet, of certain numbers which are joined with pleasure to the ear, but yet in a perpetual course, so that if you cannot hear the flutes, you can by no means distinguish how far the connection will run, and whence it will return again to the beginning."*

Nevertheless, Boethius, after the age of Augustine, represents performers on instruments as in a state of subserviency; and speaks of verse as if it were almost essential to music. According to Boethius, as cited by Hawkins, Vol. I. p. 322, "three faculties are employed in the musical art: one which is exercised in playing on instruments, another that of the poet, which directs the composition of verses; and a third which judges of the former two. As to the first, the performance of instruments, it is evident that the artists obey as servants, and as to poets, they are not led to verse so much by reason as by a certain instinct, which we call genius. But that which assumes to itself the power of judging of these two, that can examine into rhythms, songs [melodies] and their verse, as it is the exercise of reason and judgment is most properly to be accounted music; and he only is a musician, who has the faculty of judging according to speculation and the approved ratios of sounds, of the modes, genera and rhythmi of songs [melodies], and their various commixtures, and

* L. III., c. 1.

of the verses of the poets."* Thus it appears, that in the age of Boethius, the chief dependence of musicians for a measure and guide of time was the movement of poetry, with its settled order and melodious arrangement of feet and syllables in verses, or at least in metres. And it does not clearly appear that for several ages after the death of that last of the pure Latins, any independent measure of time in music afforded full compensation for the loss of rhythm, through the fatal corruption of the Latin language and the final decline of classical literature, consequent upon the irruption of the Goths and the overthrow of the Imperial government. Some compensation was made by the use of notes of equal length, applied indiscriminately to long and short syllables, without regard to the rules of ancient prosody. But the time-table was not perfected before the thirteenth century. And even as late as the fifteenth, Franchinus Gaffurius, according to Hawkins, wrote concerning the *invention* of a perfect system of musical time in these terms: 'Musicians *have invented* certain characters, by means whereof, the diversity of measured times being previously understood, they are able to form any Cantus in the same manner as verse is made from different feet."†

It might not be inappropriate here to trace, in a philosophical and historical view, the continued connection of music and poetry, by which after a long period of darkness the invention and perfection of a complete system of musical rhythm, and the perfect

* Boethius De Musica, L. I., c. 34. † Vol. II., p. 312.

combination of melody and harmony, by means of improvements in musical notation, were contemporaneous with the rise and progress of a species of poetry, which above every other, ancient and modern, possesses the characteristics of the true melody of poetry; namely, English blank verse. This, in the uninterrupted flow of a varied but strictly measured movement, in other words, the continuance of a tune or strain throughout the whole period, however protracted, in which any sentiment is uttered, as far surpasses the Hexameter of the Greeks and Latins, in which each line, without regard to the completion of the sense, was a full tune or strain, as that ancient verse does the more monotonous heroic of the French, with its unvarying accent and pause at the middle of each line. But it must suffice to add here a brief corroboration of this general view of a very interesting topic, in the language of an excellent writer of the last century. "In blank verse are united, in a good measure, the several properties of Latin hexameters and English rhyme: and it possesses besides many signal properties of its own. It is not confined like hexameter by a full close at the end of every line; nor like rhyme, by a full close at the end of every couplet. Its construction, which admits the lines to run into each other, gives it a still greater majesty than arises from the length of a hexameter line. By the same means, it admits inversion even beyond the Latin or Greek hexameter; for these suffer some confinement by the regular closes at the end of every line. In its music, it is illustrious above all. The melody of hexameter verse is circum-

scribed to a line; and of English rhyme to a couplet [or a stanza]. The melody of blank verse is under no confinement, but enjoys the utmost privilege of which melody of verse is susceptible; which is to run hand in hand with the sense. In a word, blank verse is superior to hexameter in many articles; and inferior to it in none, save in the freedom of arrangement and in the use of long words."*

These observations upon the natural and intimate connection of music with poetry tend to establish some important principles respecting the true standard of modern music. Those principles will be sufficiently illustrated by a brief and limited application of some rules of criticism founded on them.

* Encycl. Britann.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROPER STYLE OF SACRED MUSIC.

For a suitable illustration of the most important of those grand principles, by which the true standard of modern music has been defined, the chief regard is justly due to sacred music, as the real source of all that is most excellent in the cultivated music of modern times.

The music of the church, then, may be appropriately considered as including these three classes of compositions—the Chant, the Anthem, and the Metrical Tune. And in each of these departments of sacred music there is much opportunity for the application of principles of good taste and rules of sound criticism, derived from the analogy between music and the other liberal and fine arts of rhetoric and poetry, and sculpture and painting.

The Chant, in some form, is doubtless the most ancient species of sacred music. Before the invention of the time-table, while the movements of vocal music depended entirely upon the laws of prosody, all singing, even of metrical language, must have partaken somewhat of the nature of that kind which is now called *chanting*. Whether, indeed, the mere

circumstance of antiquity can be justly deemed an excellence in music, may be safely doubted, in view of the vast improvements which have been made, both in the science and the art of music, within the last four centuries. But though the chant is the most ancient species of sacred music, it is not, for that reason, to be pronounced actually inferior, for the great purposes of such music, to the anthem and the metrical tune. The comparative value of these several departments of the music of the Church depends far more upon other circumstances than upon their antiquity or their novelty. In fact, the modern chant is quite different from the ancient chant; as in other respects,—movement, for instance,—so especially in the important results of the recent discovery and improvement of the science of harmony. The difference between the two is so great, that the simple melodies, commonly called the Gregorian tones, are, under the hand of an organist, no longer the Gregorian music, except in the mere name. Clothed in regular harmony, so far as they will admit of such improvement, they are nothing else than modern music, to all intents and purposes. And the idea of adopting the Gregorian tones, improved by modern harmony, in order to assimilate the music of the church to that of the sixth or seventh century, is a mere fiction of the fancy. But the difference between the ancient and the modern chant, and between the Gregorian music and the more ancient Ambrosian, will be more fitly shown in another place.

As to the adaptation of the Gregorian tones, in

the form of simple melody, to the purpose of intoning the psalter, and other portions of the service of the church, it is a matter which, in the present state of cultivated music, belongs rather to the elocutionist than to the singer. The most important question concerning it is, whether it was not more practicable in the ancient languages, such as the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, than it is in the English tongue? Another very pertinent question is, whether the multiplication of books in the English language, and of persons able to read, wherever it is spoken, does not render almost nugatory the only reason ever urged with much force, for singing in unison; namely, that it tends to secure a distinct utterance of the words used? And yet another inquiry of some moment is this: What parts of the service of the church in English are really suitable to be read, or said, *in a tone*, by men, who would make, on all occasions, the most effectual use of the noble faculty of speech?

It may well be doubted, whether the genius of the English tongue and the dictates of good taste in the use of it will admit of any attempt at such musical reading or speaking as Augustine calls *pronouncing*, where he says that Athanasius made the reader of the psalm in the church of Alexandria to sound it with so little variation of tone, that it was nearer to pronouncing than to singing. That by pronouncing he meant scanning, or a mode of reading like that in which Latin and Greek poetry was anciently rehearsed, according to the measure of its feet, has been already shown, by his own use of the same word in other places. And it is well known from

the declarations of Cicero and Quintilian, that among the ancient Latins, at least, prose as well as poetry was often thus scanned, or pronounced with a measured movement, by some of the most accomplished speakers.* But the English language, even in the most melodious of its poetry, does not admit of such distinction of short and long syllables as is essential to scanning, and much less in its prose. And therefore, while the Alexandrian chant of Athanasius, though as music but little superior to such scanning of Latin prose, may have been on account of its agreeable rhythm, very fair music for that age,† the intoning of English prose, in apparent imitation

* Cassiodorus also, in the sixth century, speaks of rhythm, as if it were then observed even in speaking. He says that the natural rhythm of the living voice (*animatae voci*) preserves a beautiful melody, if it aptly hold the rests (*apte taceat*), fitly speak again (*congruenter loquatur*), and by the way of the accent march along (*gradiatur*) with musical feet and a well regulated sound (*musicus pedibus composita voce*). Variar., p. 77. Ed. Par. 1583.

† Both Hawkins and Burney seem to have been very careless in some of their allusions to the music of ancient Christians. Hawkins confounds the Ambrosian music of Milan with the Athanasian of Alexandria (Vol. I., p. 343), making Ambrose to say of his own what Augustine, by way of contrast to that, says of the Athanasian ; and erroneously ascribing to Augustine a preference for the latter (Vol. III., pp. 58, 59) ; mistakes which the imperfect account of Bingham (L. XIII. c. 1) might correct. In another place, Prelim. Disc., p. 53, he speaks of "scattered hints," given by Augustine and by Bede, on a subject which even the former sets forth quite fully, and with a good degree of precision, namely, the transfer of the prosody of poetry to music. See Augustine De Mus., *passim*. Burney treats the Bishop of Hippo still more slightingly, but perhaps more safely and prudently; having evidently neglected to read thoroughly all that even this one of the ancient fathers had written about music.

of such music or musical speech, may be nothing less than a puerile perversion of a language, which, in its whole structure and by its very genius, is adapted and restricted, according to the dictates of good taste, to a very different use of musical sounds.

But whatever might be said, in a full discussion of these points of ecclesiastical elocution, it is certain, that the English language is very suitable for *chanting;* according to the style in which this species of music has been generally practised in the canticles of the Book of Common Prayer. From the period of the Reformation there have never been wanting excellent strains of sublime harmony, admirably adapted to such sentiments as those of the Venite, the Jubilate, the Magnificat and the Benedictus. And if, by any means, a good series of the most substantial of those chants which have acquired a character as standards of musical composition, could be brought into general use in parishes which give some commendable attention to the cultivation of sacred music, there would be but little further to be desired by such parishes in this respect.

Unhappily, however, the increasing popularity of this species of music tempts many mere dabblers to try their hand continually at the composition of chants; often, indeed, before they have learned the first principles of good chanting. On this account, there is already much occasion to apply to this department of sacred music the most stringent principles of criticism suggested by the analogy between music and rhetoric. And the most important object of such criticism is to prune away, on the one hand,

many chants that are utterly destitute of such simplicity as this species of music requires; and on the other hand, many that are intolerably meagre, through want of full, close and rich harmony; which, either expressed or implied, is absolutely necessary, to stamp upon any composition the great crowning quality of perfect unity.

Nothing, however, connected with this department of sacred music is more worthy of censure, than a certain class of very popular pieces, which, founded upon the chant, but rising somewhat above it in point of variety, and aspiring to some of the embellishments of metrical tunes, yet fall far short of the dignity, stateliness and grandeur of the complete anthem. These heterogeneous compositions should be ever deemed an abomination in the sanctuary, and doomed to speedy expulsion, whenever they are rashly introduced through the conceit of tyros in musical science. They frequently creep in, under the form of introductory sentences, arrayed in a garb utterly unsuitable. And sometimes they boldly usurp the place of regular chants. Nothing should be at any time allowed in a chant, and used as a chant, that is not quite level to the capacity of persons of ordinary skill in music. And if, occasionally, or even statedly, in such a hymn as the Te Deum, more elaborate music be admitted, it should be some finished work of a truly competent composer; and yet for ordinary use, so arranged as to be easily performed by singers of moderate attainments. Nor would such chaste, classical strains of elaborate

music be unsuitable for other hymns and canticles upon special occasions and great festivals.

On such occasions, at least, might well be introduced the most perfect species of music, the complete anthem. With regard to this department of music, indeed, it is not necessary here to speak at large; the present state of musical art in this country being such as rarely to introduce any thing really worthy of the name of an anthem into our religious services. In the cathedrals of the venerable Church of England, however, and to some extent in its parish churches also, this has been, from the period of the Reformation, a prominent and important department of sacred music.* The contributions of the English masters

* Witness the following advertisements from a late English paper:

Services and Anthems for the present Week at Lichfield Cathedral.—Tenth Sunday after Trinity: Aldrich in G throughout; "Lord of all power," (Mason;) and "Lord, what is man," (Handel.) Monday: Warsh in D, and Wyse in E; "Let the words," (Calcott;) and "Blessed be thou," (Kent.) Tuesday: Nares in D, and Aldrich in E minor; "O Lord grant the King," (Nares,) and "We will rejoice," (Croft.) Wednesday: Tallis in D, and Dupuis in F; "I will arise," (Creyghton;) and "I will sing of Thy power," (Greene.) Thursday: Jer. Clark in G, and Greene in C; "Blessing and glory," (Boyce,) and "God is gone up," (Croft.) Friday: Bevin in D, and Childe in E minor; "Lord for thy tender mercies,' (Farrant,) and "Blessed is he," (Nares.) Saturday: Rogers in G; Old Hundredth Psalm, (Tallis;) and "Grant, we beseech Thee," (Calcott.)

Services and Anthems for the Ensuing Week, at Lichfield Cathedral.—Eleventh Sunday after Trinity: Gibbons in F throughout; "My God, look upon me," (Reynolds,) and "God is our hope," (Greene.) Monday: Barrow in F; "Try me," (Nares,) and "O Lord God of my salvation," (Jer. Clark.) Tuesday: Porter in D; "Behold how good and joyful," (Porter,) and "O give thanks," full,

to this department of their national music embrace many truly classical productions; such as will never suffer from comparison with the masses and motetts prepared by continental composers for the Romish services; if regard be had rather to the important characteristics of true sublimity, and genuine, chaste beauty, than to the temporary effect of operatic conceits, dramatic design, and meretricious ornament. And were the musical taste of this country such as to justify the publication of a good collection of those magnificent anthems, the progress thus indicated in the cultivation of the highest species of music would be but the first step in a course of very desirable improvement, as yet unknown, and almost unsought.

By the term anthem* is denoted, at the present day, an elaborate musical composition, which bears a relation to the chant, somewhat similar to that already traced between blank verse and more restricted forms of poetry. As rhyme, for instance, is confined

(Boyce.) Wednesday: Creyghton in E plain; "Bow Thine ear," (Byrde,) and "O worship," (Hayes.) Thursday: Childe in F; "Glory be to God on high," (Loosmore,) and "Hear my prayer," (Stroude.) Friday: Childe and Rogers, in A, minor; "Almighty and everlasting," (Gibbons), and "Thou shalt open," (Porter.) Saturday: Byrde in D, and Blow in G; "O Lord, grant the King," (Childe,) and "O how amiable," (Richardson.)

* By this term some writers mean simply Antiphon, from which the name of the modern anthem, but only the name, is said by others to have been derived. Hawkins says that in the reign of Henry VIII. Dr. Tye began to set to music the Acts of the Apostles in verse. But not being successful in that, he began to write more elaborate music for portions of the Psalms in prose, and laid the foundation of the English Anthem.

to couplets, or to stanzas which do not often in the more simple metres of English verse exceed four lines, so the chant is confined to two, or four, short phrases of notes. And as the melody of blank verse may run hand in hand with the sense through many lines without interruption, filling up a whole period, however protracted, so the anthem may contain many phrases and strains of notes, variously modulated with much skill, and repeated and protracted, with great scope of expression and significance. It need not, indeed, be always intricate in its design; nor in its structure highly embellished. It may be very simple as respects contrivance, and yet highly effective; apparently meagre in its several melodies, and yet truly sublime, through its grand combination of them in a full flow of genuine harmony; imperceptibly bringing all the best powers of music to bear upon its grand object of soothing and elevating the soul, and thus realizing to the utmost the great fundamental maxim of good taste in all the fine arts, that the perfection of art is to conceal artifice. It is unquestionable, that the eloquence of the pulpit opens a wide field for the legitimate introduction of all those ornaments of style and manner, that are consistent with the dignity and purity of sacred oratory, which is the highest form of the art of persuasion. In like manner does the preparation of the genuine anthem afford ample scope for the highest talents of composers of music, and for the display of all such ornaments, both of harmony and melody, as are conducive to true sublimity and pure beauty. And the performance of this species of music, in a

fitting manner, is not less adapted to elevate the moral tone and animate the religious sentiment of Christian congregations, than to entertain their cultivated taste, and gratify their enlightened sensibility.

It does not come within the plan of this work to consider at large the character and claims of the *oratorio*. This department of musical science and art might doubtless justly claim, above every other, the honor of the most immediate and legitimate connection with those improvements which have been clearly traced under a former head to the zeal and taste of ancient Christians; improvements which constitute the basis of all cultivated music in modern times. To establish this claim of the oratorio, it is not necessary to prove that this species of sacred music was really of earlier origin than the secular music of the modern opera. Be the truth what it may, with regard to the question of priority, yet it is certain that those portions of operatic music which form, in general, the most effectual attraction and support of the modern stage, namely, its overtures, symphonies, and choral performances, are under inalienable obligations to the progress of sacred music, and its influence upon the science of harmony;* of which the oratorio, or epic anthem, is the legitimate and natural fruit. This is a very important and interesting fact. It is a fact which truly intelligent and considerate musicians can hardly recall to mind, without realizing in the heedless ingratitude and frequent impieties of the patrons of the drama, the fable

* Burney, passim.

of the viper stinging with venomous fang the bosom that warmed it into life.

But the wrong thus done to sacred music is often sadly aggravated by the misconduct of some of its most prominent directors, who indirectly inflict a similar injury upon its holy cause. Hardly could greater injustice be done to its high claims as an independent and most richly endowed department of music, than is done by many organists; while, overlooking the sublime strains of truly ecclesiastical music, provided in profusion by the masters of the world, they introduce in their miscalled *voluntaries*, scraps and shreds of the operatic composures of musical gold-beaters; whose highest art is to draw out the precious substance of genuine sacred harmony to the utmost degree of availability, for the use of those who can only shine with a borrowed, temporary lustre. Well may intelligent Christians, under such circumstances, be excused the erroneous impression, that the church is rather indebted to the world for good music, than the world to the church. But a more palpable deficiency of good taste could hardly be manifested by organists; who, endowed with opportunities to produce the highest effects of the sublime and the truly beautiful in the noble art of music, yet expend their powers and prostitute their high faculties to startle and amuse vain and thoughtless *visitors* of the house of God.

Probably the most effectual remedy of such evils and wrongs might be found in the diligent cultivation and stated introduction of the genuine English anthem; in the elevating effect of its chaste strains of

graceful melody, duly attired with the becoming drapery of rich, full harmony, majestically flowing forth in ample folds of concord grand and grave. A due acquaintance of Christian congregations with this species of music would soon result in a truly refined, as well as purely religious taste. A public sentiment would soon be formed, which would admit as voluntaries in the house of God none but genuine ecclesiastical compositions; rendering all others, whether brought from the latest opera, or wantonly tripping into church, in the form of some popular waltz, as insipid and intolerable as they are improper.

In this application of the principles of criticism and good taste, the most important department of sacred music is that of the Metrical Tune. It is most important to consider this particularly, because it is, in this country, as yet, the predominant department, and the most defective. There is, indeed, reason to fear that the frequent and serious defects of metrical tunes in general at the present day have had a tendency to prejudice many against this species of music; as though it were quite unworthy to be connected, in divine service, with the solemnity and grandeur of substantial chants and majestic anthems. Nevertheless, it is an important species of music, and truly worthy of diligent cultivation.

It is especially agreeable to the genius of English poetry; which not only requires perfect accentual rhythm of feet, but also favors and delights in rhyme, of couplets or triplets, and in much variety of lyrical metre. There is an opinion widely prevalent, that metrical psalms and hymns are comparatively a

modern addition to the public worship of Christians. But it is a notion founded on a very superficial examination of the sacred music of the primitive church. There is not the slightest show of positive evidence, that the early Christians entirely neglected the use of metrical hymns, at a period when the vocal music of all cultivated nations was in a great degree identified with metrical language. And if they had done so, it would not be manifest, that modern Christians, in nations which have largely introduced into their poetical language an element that may safely be called new, namely rhyme, ought to reject this peculiarity of their own tongues from all their sacred songs. For, in the Hebrew of the inspired psalms of David, one of the peculiarities of ancient poetry, namely alliteration, which is adapted, like rhyme, to aid the memory, frequently makes its appearance; and doubtless in connection with other peculiarities of Hebrew poetry, which are not appreciated by modern scholars. But there is not wanting abundant testimony in early records of the church to warrant the assertion, that in the primitive ages metrical hymns were composed both by the Greek and the Latin fathers, as well for the public services of Christians as for their private and domestic devotions. And at that time the versions of Greek and Latin prose, into which the psalms and other poetical portions of the Old Testament were translated, gave far more scope for the practice of musical rhythm, and pleasing, flowing melody in those parts of the ancient psalmody, than can be found in the English language, without its lyrical metres and its varied stan-

zas of rhyme. A brief view, therefore, of the most prominent evidences of the use of metrical psalms and hymns by the early Christians will suffice for the purpose of this argument.

In the first place the teaching of the New Testament is worthy of notice. The animating exhortation which St. Paul gave to the Ephesians, as a quotation, in these words, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,"* forms, in the Greek, a beautiful strain of lyric metre. Nor can it be justly deemed an unwarrantable conjecture, that the passage may have been a metrical paraphrase of the corresponding language of Isaiah,† employed in the religious worship of Christians during the apostolic age.

He must be therefore a bold critic, who would contend that the Greek term ᾠδαῖς (literally odes), used by St. Paul, in Eph. v. 19 and Coloss. iii. 16, and rendered in our English Bible by the word "songs," must not be taken to include metrical compositions in any language. For it is a singular fact, that in two other passages of the New Testament which contain the same term, with examples of its meaning, what is called by the sacred writer a song or *ode*, can hardly be read by a good scholar with due regard to the rhythmical quantity and convenient contractions of the Greek language, and not display the stately movement of iambic metre.‡

In connection with this scriptural testimony, that of Philo Judæus, who wrote in the days of the in-

* Eph. v. 14. † Isa. lx. 1. ‡ Rev. v. 9, and xv. 3.

spired apostles, may well be introduced, with the comments of Eusebius, who expressly applies what Philo says of the sacred music of the Therapeutæ, for a description of the usage of primitive Christians in this respect. Describing some of the practices of the Therapeutæ, Philo says, "They not only lead a contemplative life, but they make psalms and hymns to God, of various metres and melodies, necessarily framing them in the more grave rhythms."* "And when one rising up, sings a hymn made to God, either a new one, which he hath made, or some old one of the ancient poets (for the poets have left metres and melodies of iambic verse, lyrics, hymns spondaic, sacrificial, stationary, festive,† beautifully measured in stanzas of many variations), afterwards the others according to order, in a beautiful method; all the multitude hearing in silence, except when it is necessary to sing the concluding strains and the chorus. It is not material to determine here whether Philo was a Christian or not. Nor is it necessary to consider whether those whom he calls Therapeutæ were Christians. It is sufficient for the purpose of this argument, that Eusebius, who wrote at the beginning of the fourth century, declares that the work of Philo just cited "does manifestly contain all the ecclesiastical rules" which were to that time observed among Christians. The father of ecclesiastical history, having spoken of the new

* P. 612. Ed. Paris, 1552. Comp. Hawkins, Prel. Disc., p. 60.

† Some of the terms here employed by Philo can hardly be rendered into English.

psalms made by the Therapeutæ, and having given in brief a part of the passage just cited from Philo, afterwards refers to the rest of it, and speaks of their holy exercises which were then in use among the Christians, more especially about the feast of our Lord's passion, "all which," he says, "the man mentioned, diligently and accurately describing them, hath related in his writings according to the very manner in which to this time they have been observed by us alone; especially mentioning the vigils of the great solemnity, and the holy exercises in them, and the hymns commonly used among us; and how, one singing and playing* with rhythm becomingly, the rest, hearing in silence, resound in concert the last parts of the hymns."† And here, again, it is not material to determine whether Philo meant by the great solemnity, as Eusebius understands him to mean, the festival of Easter, with the solemnities of Passion Week preceding, or the Jewish Feast of Weeks, or Christian Pentecost. The testimony of Eusebius, as to the character of the psalms and hymns and spiritual songs used by the early Christians, is in any case the same. And it is a very explicit testimony to the fact, that metrical psalms and hymns were used in the primitive church, even from the days of the inspired apostles to his own time.

The learned Valesius, in his notes on Eusebius, does indeed express a doubt, whether psalms and hymns *of human composition* were used so early as

* Gr. ἐπιψάλλοντος.

† Hist., L. II., c. 17.

the age of Philo, in the days of inspiration; and also remarks upon the account given by Pliny the younger, of the custom of Christians in his day, to say one with another by turns a hymn or ode to Christ, as unto God, that "there is a difference between saying and composing a song or hymn." But this remark is set aside by another learned editor,* in his note upon the assertion of a certain writer of the second century, cited by Eusebius, that "the psalms also and hymns of the brethren, written at the beginning by the faithful, do set forth the praises of Christ the Word of God, and attribute divinity to him." "Hence," says the English editor, "it appears, that 'twas an ancient custom in the church to compose psalms and hymns in honor of Christ," and adds that "Pliny, in his epistle to Trajan mentions this usage among the Christians, as we have already observed."† And the same view of this subject is given in another place by Valesius himself. In a note upon a certain passage from Dionysius, cited by Eusebius, and commending Nepos, an Egyptian bishop, who was heretical in some points, for the many psalms and hymns he composed, with which many of the brethren are even at this time delighted, he speaks of the custom of the ancient Christians, that they "used to compose psalms and hymns in honor of Christ, as Eusebius in the end of the fifth book attesteth."‡ In the same place, moreover, this learned man says, "We also find mention of these hymns in the Epistle of the Council of Antioch against Paul of Samosata,

* Shorting. † Id., p. 90. ‡ Id., p. 129.

and in the last canon but one of the council of Laodicea, where there is an express prohibition that no psalms which in Greek are called ἰδιωτικοὶ (idiōtikoi), that is, composed by private or ignorant persons, should be sung in churches." This view, therefore, of the testimony of Eusebius, as gathered by him from the history of Christianity during the first three centuries, may be well concluded by a single reference to the Epistle against Paul of Samosata. The very ground of his condemnation, with respect to this matter was, that "*he abolished* the psalms, which were usually sung in honor of our Lord Jesus Christ as *novel* and the composures of modern men."* And in view of this abundant and plain testimony of the great historian of the primitive church, it is needless to consider in detail the corroborative evidence to the same effect, furnished by the efforts of Basil, Chrysostom, Gregory Nazianzen and others, to maintain and disseminate the true doctrines of the gospel, by means of psalms and hymns of human composition, adapted to the circumstances and emergencies of the church at particular periods. It is only necessary to observe, how guarded and discriminating is the language in which Gregory Nazianzen speaks of such efforts, and of the caution with which they should ever be employed. Alluding to the numerous psalms and hymns of heretics, he says, "If their swelling words, and their new psalteries contrary to that of David, and their elegance of metre be called the third testament, we also will utter psalms and write many, and

* Euseb., L. VII., c. 30.

put them in metre, since we think we have the Spirit of God, if indeed this be the grace of the Spirit, and not a human novelty."* But by the phrase "put them in metre," Gregory manifestly refers to *the variety of elegant metres* of which he had just before spoken, as characteristic of the psalms and hymns of heretics at that time. For he could not have intended to apply the term *novelties* to "the more grave rhythms" of which Philo speaks in the passage cited by Eusebius. And with this single remark upon his cautious language, which expresses the most serious objection ever made by any of the ancient Christians against psalms and hymns in metre, it is safe to leave the testimony of the Greek fathers upon this subject.

Preparatory, however, to an examination of the most prominent among the Latin fathers, some important points in the history of Latin literature must be briefly considered.

It is remarkable, that one of the English translators† of Eusebius has given instead of the word *rhythms* in the phrase just repeated from Philo the totally different term *rhymes*. It does not appear that rhymes, or the termination of two or more contiguous or connected lines or clauses with the same sound, obtained any place in the writings of the ancient Greek poets, except by mere accident occasionally. Some have, indeed, affirmed with slight show of evidence, that rhyme was not only a characteristic, but even an element of the earliest poetry of the an-.

* Orat., 51. † Shorting.

cient Latins.* But it is manifest that the similar terminations of words grammatically connected together by case and gender, or by mood and tense, in Latin, would, in a copious and compact style, materially interfere with the purity and power of rhyme, as a characteristic of certain fixed points in verses, and thus produce at once, in connection with rhyming terminations, an offensive monotony, and an excessive jingle of similar sounds. Accordingly, in the classical literature of the ancient Romans of the Augustan age, this characteristic of the lyric poetry of many modern nations found no place, except by mere accident, or as an occasional fancy of some few poets. Nor is there any clear and conclusive evidence of its admission by subsequent Latin writers, prior to the fifth century of the Christian era, and the declension of Roman literature; even the authenticity of the famous hymn commonly ascribed to Damasus,† bishop of Rome in the fourth century, being liable to suspicion; on account of its singular appearance amid the multitude of hymns, entirely destitute of all trace of rhyme, which were written by Prudentius and others at the same period, or a little later.

Of course, therefore, by the metrical psalms and hymns of the ancient Christians are never to be understood psalms and hymns in rhyme. And as in this particular, so also in others, it is necessary to observe with care the difference between metrical psalms and hymns in ancient Greek and Latin, and

* Trench, Sacr. Lat. Poetry, Intr.

† "Martyris ecce dies Agathae."

psalms and hymns in English metre. Happily, some plain definitions and distinctions laid down by Augustine in his treatise on music furnish all the information that is needed upon such points; few, if any, hymns in Latin verse of an earlier age than that of Augustine and Ambrose being now extant.

According to Augustine, then, a plain distinction was recognized, as well in the ecclesiastical Latin of the early Christians as in the classical Latin of the Augustan age, between *rhythm* and *metre*, and also between *metre* and *verse*. Neither two of these three things were the same. All metre was rhythm, but all rhythm was not metre. And all verse was metre, but all metre was not verse.* The term *rhythm* had reference to the connection of syllables as short and long, or of one and two times, or beats;† and to their primary and most simple relations in feet; which were composed of two, three, or four syllables, either short or long, or short and long combined in some certain order, according to various forms, which were distinguished by names, or technical terms of grammarians. And in the ecclesiastical Latin of that early period, as well as in the classical, the principles of rhythm, and the rules for the measure of syllables as short and long, or their duration through one or two times or beats, were, in general, carefully observed, not only in poetry, but also in prose.‡ Thus a *rhythm*, according to Augustine, was a series of

* L. III., c. 2.

† Quintilian says, "That a long syllable is of two times, and a short of one, even boys know." L. IX.

‡ That there was in the mere enunciation of Latin in the fourth

feet, of corresponding classes continued *at pleasure;* but constituting a certain orderly, musical, and agreeable succession or intermixture of short and long syllables. A *metre*, however, was a *limited* series of feet, which, having extended through a certain number of times or beats, that might be filled up, either with syllables spoken or sung, or with rests, returned again to the beginning of a line, strain or tune. And a *verse* was a limited series of feet, which was divided into two members by a certain joint or partition, such as in English verse is called the *caesural* point or pause. These definitions and distinc-

century, without reference either to singing or scanning, a refinement beyond the imitation or comprehension of modern scholars, is manifest from the nice distinction which Augustine draws between the Latin verb *pŏne* and the adverb *ponè*. Both consist of the same times (*eisdem temporibus*), and the same letters (*eisdem literis*), and according to Virgil, a favorite authority with Augustine, of the same quantity. (See Ecl., I., 74. Aen., XI., 366. II., 208, 725.) Yet they differed in enunciation, because they had the accent in different places (*eo distant quod in diversis locis habent acumen*). Aug. De Mus., L. I., c. 1. With much reason, therefore, do the Benedictine annotators remark: "Hence we may understand how badly we all at this day pronounce the Latin language, and how faulty especially is our reading of Latin verse. For who is accustomed to pronounce *pŏne* and *ponè* with any difference between the two?" Such a view of the scholarship of Augustine should seem sufficient to have shielded him from the insinuations of the sneering Gibbon, who had confessedly no personal acquaintance with any of his voluminous works except his Confessions and his "City of God." Yet, while acknowledging that the close of the third century was an age far from being destitute of poetical merit, he endeavors to disparage the scholarship of the Bishop of Hippo, by charging him with ignorance of Greek literature, just after the time when Julian the Apostate, Gibbon's favorite Emperor, had forbidden the study of Greek to Christians. But see on this point, August. Retract., L. I., c. 7.

tions are largely illustrated and much insisted on by Augustine, in the third and fourth books of his treatise on music. They are essential to a clear understanding and correct statement of the character of ancient psalmody, and the music of the early Latin Christians; which included rhythm, metre and verse, according to these definitions and distinctions. And in connection with these remarks upon important points in the history of Latin literature, some extended observations must be made concerning the use and meaning of certain Latin words, by which some of the music of ancient Christians is frequently described.

Many writers are prone to adopt a mistranslation, or a misconstruction of the Latin phrase, "Cantus Firmus," and the corresponding Italian, "*Canto Fermo*," which they invariably, but incorrectly render or explain by the English phrase "*plain chant.*" Thus from a merely superficial comparison of etymological resemblances, reasoning mainly from the similar sound of the words *cantus, canto*, and *chant*, many conclude that the last of these terms, which is, in truth, nothing but the English name of a certain species of English music, describes what was exclusively the ecclesiastical music of the sixth, or at least of the seventh century. In truth, the English noun, *chant*, whatever might be said of the poetical use of the same word as a verb, does not furnish a translation of the Latin term *cantus*, in any of the senses in which it was anciently used. This term, in classical usage, commonly signified music in general, instrumental as well as vocal.

Thus Cicero mentions the *cantus*, or music of trumpets; Lucretius, the cantus or music of horns; Virgil, the cantus of the pipe, the conch, the horn, and the trumpet; Horace, the cantus of the harp; Seneca, the cantus of the trumpet; and Quintilian, the cantus of the pipe; and Pliny, by implication, speaks of the cantus of the hydraulum or water-organ. Other instances of such use of this term by classical writers of the Augustan age might be cited. In accordance with this usage of the pure classics, Augustine speaks of the cantus of strings and pipes.* And Prudentius, one of the latest of those writers, to whom the name of classical Latins can, by any means, be applied, describes the music of various instruments by the word cantus.† And when, in ancient Latin, this word signifies vocal music, there is nothing, in any case, to limit its meaning to prose, much less to such music or language as that of a modern chant in English prose. Indeed, in view of what Augustine teaches respecting rhythm, metre, and verse, and the observance of time in each syllable, as short or long, even in simple rhythms, and much more in metres and verses, it may well be doubted, whether the Latin Christians of his day had any idea of such a species of music as that of our English chant, with the tripping movement of its recited part, not marked or regulated by any beat or measure of time, but by accent or emphasis upon a few syllables, separated from each other at long intervals. It is true, that some writers do, upon certain occasions, employ the phrase "plain chant,"

* De. Lib. Arb., L. II. † Apoth., II., 146, 7.

with an evident restriction to a peculiar kind of music used in some parts of the service, as it is performed in a few of the English cathedrals; music somewhat similar in style and movement to the Cantus Gregorianus, as used in the middle ages, and applied to Latin words badly pronounced. But most writers, now-a-days, at least in this country, use the phrase "plain chant" without such limitation. And many persons, consequently, labor under an entire misapprehension as to the claims of certain kinds of music, on the score of antiquity; being not only widely mistaken as to the character of the music adopted by the ancient Christians in their religious worship, but also strangely misled by erroneous views respecting the proper use and true meaning of the comparatively modern phrase now under consideration.

The true meaning of the phrase *cantus firmus* is, by a free rendering in good old Saxon words, *easy song*. In this sense, the Germans often apply the phrase *cantus firmus* to the leading melody of their chorals, or plain tunes for psalms and hymns in metre; not only such tunes as were often constructed on the basis of the Gregorian cantus at the period of the Reformation, but others more recently composed. Thus they would call the leading melody of such a tune as Old Hundredth the *cantus firmus*. And this use of the phrase is in strict accordance with its literal meaning and its original application. Its literal meaning is *firm* or *fixed music;* or in another significant Saxon phrase, *strong song*. It was originally applied, at a period comparatively

modern, to denote the tones or strains that were *sung*, as distinguished from the *variable* accompaniments of rude harmony, sometimes added to those strains by the *discant*, or *separate tone*, which formed the only accompaniment afforded by the organ, upon its first introduction into the services of the church. And sometimes the Germans at the present day seem to apply the phrase *cantus firmus* especially to simple melodies, which are sung in unison by all voices, while the organist plays a full and rich harmony. But in Italian and French, and sometimes in English and German editions of music arranged in various parts for different voices, the leading melody, which is assigned to the soprano or treble voices, and is the part least liable to alteration in any new arrangement of the harmony, is termed the *canto;* the epithet *fermo* being omitted, but still understood or implied, both in its primary sense of firm or fixed, and its secondary meaning, as denoting that part in any composition, whether chant, choral, or chorus, which is comparatively the easy song—the most conspicuous and familiar part—the strain most readily distinguished and followed by those who sing by rote; commonly called the *air*. By the French, moreover, the term *chant* is often applied not only to the air of a metrical tune for hymns in rhyme or for any lyrical songs, but also to the leading melody of a piece of instrumental music.* And from these observations, several points of some moment with regard to the proper use of the phrase *cantus firmus* or *canto fermo* are manifest.

* "Le Chant et l'accompagnement avec le même main."

This phrase cannot with propriety be applied to the music of such chants, in parts, of modern harmony, as are sometimes called Gregorian; farther than to denote the original melodies of those chants, or the simple Gregorian tones, considered merely with reference to the intervals of the notes. On the other hand, it is equally applicable to the leading melodies of any other chants, or even of chorals and anthems. And it originally described such strains of vocal music in the Latin tongue as cannot by any means be produced with good effect in the use of English prose. In view of these facts, indeed, it is safe to affirm that even the cantus of Gregory, in its original form, was, as to its musical effect, both upon the hearers and the singers, more similar to the strains of plain tunes for iambic metre in English than to chants in English prose, however rhythmical its phraseology. And in this respect it were hardly possible to improve the admirable version of the Psalter in the Book of Common Prayer.

It appears, therefore, that as respects the mere circumstance of antiquity, even the cantus of Gregory rather sustains the claim of metrical tunes, than that of the modern English chant. Accordingly, such tunes, sometimes called "syllabic psalmody,"* have been often constructed upon the basis of the Cantus Gregorianus, with the utmost facility, ever since the Reformation. It would seem, moreover, that in the tenth century the Gregorian cantus, by which the more rhythmical music of the ancient

* Burney and Smith.

Christians had been superseded, was applied to Latin hymns in rhyme, called *prosae* or *proses;* compositions, in which some of the laws of number* and quantity observed in the prosody of the ancient Greeks and Romans were neglected. Probably, however, such hymns, often quite rhythmical in the structure and length of the lines, were made still more so by the skill of musicians, constantly striving to find in a system of time for the measure of musical phrases and strains, some reparation for the loss of ancient metre and rhythm, occasioned by the corruption of the Latin tongue and the extensive banishment of verse from the Roman Church in the seventh and eighth centuries. And they may be safely regarded as a constrained concession of the opposers of psalms and hymns in verse to the natural and intimate connection between music and poetry.

But this was more fully recognized in the more ancient cantus of Ambrose, if not also in the most ancient music of the primitive Christians; which, according to Baronius as well as Bona, was instituted by apostles and apostolic men. What that most ancient music of the Christian church was, it

* Trench says, very strangely, that "the Romans counted their syllables and did not measure them, a certain number of these constituting a rhythm; and that *numeri* is only abusively applied to verses that rest on music and time, and not on the number of syllables."—*Sacr. Lat. Poetry, Intr.*

This, like many other assertions of this author, is directly at variance with the plain declarations of Augustine and other ancient writers. See Quintil. passim.

is impossible to say with certainty. Cardinal Bona calls it simply "antiquum cantum," the *ancient music*. The important testimony of Eusebius, however, may contribute to explain the assertion of Du Cange, that the Ambrosian cantus was quite different (*omnino alium*) from the Gregorian. And whatever may have been the character of each, as to their musical tones, and their comparative merits, there can be no question as to the frequent application of the Ambrosian cantus to hymns in verse. This is fully attested by Augustine, who, in a certain place* giving an extract from some verses of Ambrose, says that they were sung "by the mouth of many." And in another place, in that very part of his Confessions which records his testimony to the excellence and power of the music adopted by Ambrose in the Church of Milan, he gives two stanzas from another beautiful hymn of that eminent father.† The fact, that hymns in verse were very extensively used in the Latin Church in the fourth and fifth centuries, is also explicitly shown by the language of Prudentius, in the preface to his Peristephanōn, where he says, "We consecrate to God the lively iambics, and the whirling trochaics, of less sanctity and power to console the afflicted. But God approves the humble verse, and hears it graciously." Of this fact, indeed, as well as the mistake of those who are wont to think of such hymns as a modern invention, striking evidence is afforded by the important kindred fact, that when Gregory, in the sixth century, partially

* Retract., L. I., c. 21. † "Deus Creator omnium."

expelled hymns in verse, he modified the Ambrosian cantus so materially as to secure for his own, in the Church of Rome, the appellation of *Cantus Ecclesiasticus renovatus*,* or, the *Ecclesiastical Music remodelled.* However, it does not appear, after all, that Gregory was absolutely and unqualifiedly opposed to hymns in verse. At all events, if "the formula of Gregory," given by Hawkins from Guido, be authentic, he did not exclude *metres* from the public worship of the church.† And according to Du Pin, Walafridus Strabo, speaking of ecclesiastical affairs in the ninth century, says that the name of hymns may be given to all psalms of praise, *though they be not in verse;* and that there are a great many churches where they are never sung in verse.‡ This most plainly implies that for two or three hundred years after the time of Gregory, psalms and hymns in verse retained a place in many portions of the Church of Rome. And of course they were, for the most part, sung to that music which is

* Du Cange, verb. Cantus.

† The language of Guido himself, as cited by Hawkins, I., 453, is appropriate here. He says that "a *cantus* is said to be metrical when it *scans* truly; which, if it be right, it will do, even if sung by itself. The resemblance between metres and songs [melodies] is not small, for *neumas* answer to feet, and *distinctions* to verses." He says, also, that "neumas should correspond to neumas, and distinctions to distinctions, according to the perfectly sweet method of Ambrosius." Cassiodorus also, who was a Christian of the sixth century, speaks of the two principal metres, Hexameter and Iambic, in terms quite consistent with what is here suggested concerning Gregory, and the Gregorian music in its original state. Variar., p. 77.

‡ Du Pin. Vol. VII., p. 167.

described by the phrase *Cantus Gregorianus*, this having been, from the reign of Charlemagne, in the eighth century, very generally established in the Roman jurisdiction by pains and penalties; even, according to Du Cange, to the exclusion of the Ambrosian cantus from the Church of Milan; notwithstanding the decision of a special council called by Pope Adrian, that the music instituted by Ambrose might be retained in that church."*

It is impossible to determine with certainty the comparative merits of these two systems of music; which, having to some extent a common character and a common use, were yet distinguished by some important differences, not precisely defined by any ecclesiastical records, or treatises on music.† Many

* Hawkins, in an account of that council, taken from Durandus, says, Vol. I., p. 375, that "it was the unanimous opinion of all, that the Ambrosian and Gregorian missals should be laid upon the altar of St. Peter the Apostle, secured by the seals of most of the Bishops, and the doors of the church shut, and that all persons present should spend the night in prayer that God would show by some sign which of these missals he chose to have used by the church; and this was done in every respect. Accordingly, in the morning when they entered the church, they found the Gregorian Missal torn to pieces and scattered here and there, but they found the Ambrosian only open upon the altar in the same place where it had been laid. By which sign they were taught from heaven that the Gregorian office ought to be dispersed throughout the whole world, and that the Ambrosian should be observed only in that church in which it was first instituted" !!! The advocates of the Ambrosian Cantus were probably glad to secure even such a favor at the hands of such a council!

† Hawkins, or his printer, makes a strange contradiction and confusion about the Ambrosian and the Gregorian Cantus. He says, Vol. I. p. 348, that the Ambrosian tones which he calls Authentic,

writers represent the Gregorian cantus as an improvement upon the Ambrosian, and a species of music superior in smoothness, sonorousness, and attractive variety.* But whatever may have been its original character, there is doubtless good ground for the suggestion of a learned writer of the last century, that it soon suffered deterioration, and that "the first gradation of the Gregorian music towards its decline, was occasioned by transferring it from verse to prose; in consequence of which that strict and inviolable regard to measured sounds, so conspicuous in ancient music, and so effectually preserved by the aptitude of measured notes to measured syllables, was lost."†

A more rapid stage of declension, however, is observable in the corrupt pronunciation of the Latin language by the Germans, Gauls, and Britons. In their vernacular tongues, they observed no such clear distinction of long and short syllables as was made by the rules of Latin prosody and the principles of Greek and Roman music. When, therefore, the Cantus Gregorianus, applied to Latin prose, was introduced among them, it could not be at once sung by them in proper time, according to the due propor-

arise from the arithmetical, and the Gregorian, which he calls Plagal, from the harmonical division of the diapason. Then, immediately, on p. 351, he speaks of the Authentics as "being divided in harmonical and the Plagals in arithmetical proportion."

It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that hasty writers, picking up scraps at second hand, on a subject treated so carelessly by historians, often commit egregious mistakes.

* Du Cange. † Encycl. Britann., Art. Mus.

tions of the different notes for the long and short syllables. Being naturally inclined, as Englishmen still are, to reduce all syllables in Latin to the same length, distinguishing the accented or emphatic ones by stress of voice only, without prolongation, their singing of the cantus of Gregory resembled, as Johannes Diaconus said, "the noise of wagons jolting down steps and rumbling confusedly."* The immediate consequence of this difficulty seems to have been, that on the one hand the teachers of the Cantus Romanus altered their music for the worse by making all the notes equal, but long, and thus perverted to the utmost the Latin language, which was almost identified with it; and, on the other hand, the native teachers of music among the Britons, Gauls, and Germans, partially resisting the introduction of the Cantus Romanus among them, intermixed with it strains of their own composition. And the ultimate result of such a state of things was the loss, to a certain extent, of that means of progress in musical science and art, which the Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries possessed and cherished in the state of Latin literature existing at that period, and the hindrance, for a long season, of that progress of good taste in sacred music which characterized the age of Augustine and Prudentius.

The important bearing of these observations upon the origin of that peculiar species of modern music, which is presented in the English chant, with its recited part of unmeasured syllables, and its cadence

* Bona De Div. Psalm. c xvii. §4.

of three or five measured notes, applied for the most part, but not uniformly, to as many syllables, is too obvious to require elucidation. And their equally important bearing upon the claims of metrical psalms and hymns in English rhyme may be summed up in few words.

In view, then, of the good taste in literature, which was characteristic of the most devoted Christians in the fourth and fifth centuries, while as yet literature and music were very intimately connected, and with a due appreciation of the efforts of Gregory for the advancement of music, and especially for the improvement of musical notation, in the sixth century, it is safe to pronounce the exclusive adoption of the Gregorian cantus, in a deteriorated form, by the Roman Church, at a subsequent period, one of the evil accidents, so to speak, which befell Christianity between the fifth and twelfth centuries. And without any farther consideration here of the comparative merits of metrical hymns of classical Latin, and mediæval hymns of Latin rhyme, utterly subversive of the principles of number and rhythm observed by such Christian poets as Ambrose and Prudentius, it is obvious to remark, that psalms and hymns in English metre and rhyme afford, aside from the elaborate music of the anthem, the only basis for metrical music, of perfect rhythm, to be sung in the English language, by a large congregation, or a full choir. They present, in truth, the legitimate product of a revived taste, founded in those permanent principles of music, which were preserved by the spirit of Christianity in its sacred services and

singing schools, even under the imperfect form of the Cantus Ecclesiasticus, amid continual dangers sometimes threatening annihilation to the very name of music; a truly refined taste, which was often sublimely displayed in the enthusiastic singing of psalms by immense congregations in the Church of England, at the period of the Reformation.* And the expulsion of metrical psalms and hymns in rhyme from public worship in the English language would be not less unreasonable than the expulsion of *printed* Prayer Books and Bibles from churches; such metrical psalms and hymns being as truly a natural, legitimate result of the combined cultivation of the English tongue and modern music, as the art of printing is of the advancement of mankind. Their importance among the exercises of public worship in the English language may be well illustrated farther by an appropriate reference to the principle on which Ephraem the Syrian, in the fourth century, wrote *many hymns and odes.* He did it, because "the Syrians were pleased with elegance of diction and beauty of modulation."† And while, according to Jerome, his writings, translated into Greek without much loss of their native beauty, were recited publicly in some churches, after the reading of the Scriptures, his hymns, written in Syriac verses of seven syllables, and very elegant, in the estimation of men skilled in that language,‡ were sung for many ages by the Maronite Christians, in their pub-

* Jewel's Letters to Martyr.

† Cave, Hist. Lir.

‡ Bona. Rer. Lit., L. I., c. 9.

lic worship. If, therefore, any, on the ground of literary taste, are ever inclined to object to metrical psalms and hymns in English rhyme, superior as they are to the jingling proses and other rhyming hymns of mediæval Latin, yet the delight of the Anglo-Saxon race in elegance of diction and beauty of modulation, presents an argument which is not to be despised or trifled with, in favor of the diligent cultivation of that species of sacred music, which is best defined by the significant phrase, *the metrical tune.*

In exemplification of the proper style of metrical tunes for the ordinary measures of English poetry, generally called long and common metre, and "sevens," no tune can stand before Old Hundredth. This is a tune which, in the perfectness of its melody, its capability of admitting a great variety of full harmony, and its general attractiveness in all respects, will probably long remain without a successful rival. But with this for a standard and model, and with the best of German chorals and a corresponding class of English tunes in view, a collection of substantial tunes of similar character might be prepared, worthy to supersede almost all others ever yet published in this country, for hymns and psalms of the metres just named. And the preparation of a good collection of such tunes, with a choice supply of others in a slightly florid style for some psalms and hymns of those metres, and a sufficient number of neat, chaste, and graceful tunes for other metres more ornate, were a work worthy the hand and genius of a master. Such a collection of metrical tunes, in which nothing should find place

that would not endure the strictest criticism, and take rank among standards and models of musical composition, would be an invaluable treasure to choirs of singers, whose taste is continually subjected to fearful risk of utter corruption by the rapid multiplication of volumes of new tunes. This has become with many, like the preparation of new text-books for schools, a mere craft or means of making gain. And there is, in truth, not less difference between the generality of tunes in many of the new collections annually put forth, and tunes which really deserve the name of sacred music, than between loose and feeble paragraphs hastily written for a daily newspaper, and the compact, polished, symmetrical, and elegant sentences of Blair and Addison and Johnson and Burke. It can hardly be deemed a wonder, therefore, if ears which are often greeted with choice strains of sublime harmony, in majestic voluntaries upon a good organ, or in the "joyful noise" of a large congregation, singing with one accord some standard chant that has stood the test of time, be averse to such slender, meagre music, as that of a vast majority of tunes, in many new collections now popular. But this plain view of the character of such inferior collections ought, at least, to shield metrical tunes of an entirely different description from the sweeping censure and hasty reprobation to which they have been rendered liable by the errors and incompetency of careless and conceited composers.

That there are metrical tunes already published, which are at once adapted to most of the varieties

of metre, ever used for psalms and hymns in the English tongue, and yet worthy, for their solemn dignity and chaste beauty, of a place in the public worship of the church, it were rash in any to deny. And even if ordinary religious services, in all parishes, could be adorned, as in the cathedrals of England, with the perfect music of complete anthems, it might be safely pronounced unwise in the extreme, to discourage the cultivation of metrical psalmody, which partakes of all the attributes of perfect music in a lower degree; or to substitute for it, in its accustomed place, chants in English prose. These, though excellent for their place and purpose, are, after all, quite imperfect music; being entirely destitute of musical rhythm, in the strict sense of the term; as applied to proportional or corresponding clauses of musical strains, limited and divided throughout by definite measures of time. And the abandonment of metrical psalmody in the public worship of the church, where the English language is used, would inevitably tend to diminish the superiority, which sacred music, happily, as yet retains over secular, in all respects.

These remarks, however, in commendation of metrical psalmody, render necessary a brief statement of some glaring faults, in many of the contributions, with which this department is filled to overflowing, by a great multitude of composers; among whom some of a low measure of ability and taste are, unhappily, very popular.

Many tunes, which are widely adopted by choirs, and admired by congregations, unaccustomed to an

organ, are really unworthy of the attention of a good organist; on account of their imperfect structure, which is ill adapted to secure, or to admit, a tasteful style of performance. Equally unfit for the hand of a good organist, and for any purpose of psalmody, are most of those very popular tunes, which present, in a piece of music that is comprised within the limits of a stanza of four, six, or eight lines, a solo, or a duett, for one or two lines, to be used alike in all the stanzas of a psalm or hymn. Nor less worthy of censure are the puerile attempts of many composers to produce a dramatic effect, by alternation of soft and loud strains, in tunes of such limited extent. All such attempts to ingraft upon metrical tunes the embellishments of the anthem, are incompatible with good taste. And with such faults may be classed the tame conceit of changing simple chants into metrical tunes, by dividing the indefinite note of recitation into three or four shorter notes, arbitrarily measured; and the corresponding novelty of adapting psalms and hymns of certain metres to the unaltered music of simple chants; to be sung after the manner of a chant, with its alternation of recited syllables, and brief melodies. Both of these fancies are inconsistent alike with the nature of genuine melody, and the genius of English poetry.

This remark, however, is hardly applicable to verses in short and common metre. When applied to such verses, the music of a regular English chant is not materially different from a metrical tune. The second and fourth lines have but one syllable in the recited part. The cadence or melody of the

first line, therefore, virtually extends through the whole of the second line, and includes six bars of measured music, applied to a line and a half of poetry. In the same manner the cadence or melody of the third line extends through and includes the fourth. Yet verses of these metres are pronounced by a late writer especially applicable to the music of a chant; perhaps without a clear perception of the fact, that they really destroy its title to the name of a chant. The truth is, that when applied to such music they virtually make it at once a metrical tune, containing at least as many consecutive bars or measures in each half, as does any common tune for the same metre. In this view of the matter, however, the chief reason given for such use of psalms and hymns in verse falls to the ground. It is difficult to see how any more verses of a psalm or hymn of short or common metre could be sung within a given time to the music of a regular English chant, than to that of any good metrical tune. And upon the whole, this novelty of chanting psalms and hymns of such metres is no less a fiction of the fancy than the idea of identifying the ancient Gregorian cantus, in which each syllable was measured by the times of prosody, or by equal notes, with the English chant, in which but a small part of the syllables are subjected to any measure of time.

The classes of metre which, in the judgment of the same writer, rank next to short and common metre in fitness for the music of a chant, are those which are sometimes marked II. 4, and III. 1, and sometimes "Hallelujah Metre" and "Sevens." But

these, when applied to the music of a chant, require a further departure from the regular rhythmical movement of a metrical tune. And as to verses of any other peculiar metre, they need only be tried to the music of a chant, to prove that in metrical psalmody, the dictates of good taste require, in general, a strict conformity of the musical movement to the poetical rhythm and accent.

It is hardly necessary to add that all of the faults here censured are manifest deviations from the true standard of style, established by the comparison of music with other liberal and fine arts, and by the consideration of its natural and intimate connection with poetry. But it is important to illustrate more particularly some of the leading principles of good taste, to be observed by composers and choristers in the preparation and adaptation of metrical tunes.

Doubtless the most appropriate movement for the ordinary iambic metres of English psalmody is that of the plain *choral*, with its notes of equal length, applied syllabically, and distinguished only by accent or emphasis upon the alternate syllables. English prosody has, indeed, the same definition of feet, as consisting of short and long syllables, which was employed by the ancient Greeks and Latins. But in point of fact the English language does not admit of such a distinction between short and long syllables, of one and two times, as was indicated by the definitions of Latin and Greek prosody. Most of the syllables which are sometimes called long in English poetry, are actually distinguished from those which are called short, only by emphasis or stress of voice,

And since this more limited distinction of syllables is incident to the very nature of English metre, and constitutes the very genius of English poetry, so far as mere language is concerned, it is the dictate of good taste to depend rather upon stress of voice, than upon a prolongation of sound, to secure due distinction of emphatic syllables, in the application of music to such poetry. Nevertheless, there are many instances, in which a far better effect may be given to psalms and hymns in English iambics, by adapting them to tunes in triple time, and prolonging the emphatic syllable of each foot through a note of two times, or its equivalent in two or three notes, than by confining all such metres to plain chorals of equal notes. Again some psalms and hymns are best suited with music by a certain class of English tunes, which might, without impropriety, be styled *florid chorals;* such, for example, as the justly popular tune, Warwick. These tunes, though easily reduced to plain chorals, by the leading chords of their counterpoint, are embellished, chiefly in the air, with as much of ornament, in the form of appogiaturas or passing notes, as is consistent with simplicity and good taste, in metrical tunes for common iambic and trochaic verse. Any prolongation and variation of syllables by divisions, or slurs, to a greater extent than is common in these tunes, and the other class, in triple time, just before described, is, in general, entirely incompatible with the design of tunes prepared for general use. And on the other hand, all huddling of five or six syllables from one part of a line or stanza of iambics, into the same space of time

which is devoted to one or two syllables in another part of the same line or stanza, is an utter perversion of the fundamental principles of metrical psalmody, in the English, as well as in any other language; especially of the grand principle that metre depends upon a certain settled proportion or relation between connected syllables, and a certain continuance of their connection or succession in a regular series. It is the same fault which appears in any attempt to apply to stanzas of English verse the irregular movement of an English chant. With an appearance of increased attention to the combined claims of proportional rhythm in modern music, and accentual rhythm in modern languages, it actually injures the musical rhythm of the tunes in which it finds place, and utterly sets at nought the rhythm of the poetry to which those tunes are applied. And it may be safely pronounced, under all circumstances, a radical error, thus to introduce in brief phrases of music such variations of movement as are peculiarly appropriate to complete anthems and other elaborate compositions; in which the utterance of words in their proper order is quite subordinate to a scientific and skilful arrangement of notes; and the effect of the music mainly dependent upon a perfect intonation and combination of its various sounds, vocal and instrumental.

The general principles thus illustrated may be easily applied to tunes for peculiar metres of every class. Such metres in the English language afford ample scope for the exercise of skill in producing happy combinations of musical and poetical rhythm.

And some of the most popular, like that of the beautiful hymn, "I would not live alway," furnish opportunity for such a combination of genius, science, and taste, as has never yet been bestowed upon this department of sacred music; and for efforts of masters in composition, which could not fail to produce a salutary effect upon writers of lyrical poetry in the English language.

CHAPTER V.

DUE PERFORMANCE OF SACRED MUSIC.

ANOTHER important topic remains to be discussed: namely, the *due performance* of the music of the church. But it may be disposed of with a brief argument, in connection with the view already taken of the past progress and the proper style of sacred music.

If it were important to conform the music of the church at the present day to that of primitive times, the due performance of such music would afford much scope for variety and skill in the practice of this excellent art. It appears, for instance, from the writings of Philo and Eusebius, as already cited under former heads, that the most ancient and general kind of music used in Christian worship, consisted, for the most part, of a *solo*, performed by one person alone, singing and sometimes playing in an excellent style the greater part of the verses or metres; the whole congregation only catching up the concluding notes of each strain, and resounding them aloud in full chorus. It appears farther from the explicit language of Augus-

tine, that the plainest music ever used in any part of the ancient church, that adopted by Athanasius at Alexandria, was performed after the manner of a *solo;* while the reader of the psalm sounded it with so little variation of tone, that it was nearer to pronouncing or scanning than to singing. Again, it is equally evident, from the testimony of Augustine, in other places, as well as from that of Ambrose and Chrysostom, that sometimes many voices, of the people assembled in promiscuous congregations, were united in singing the psalms and hymns of public worship. And yet, again, it would seem from the writings of Eusebius, Socrates and Basil, as well as from the others just referred to, that, during the first five centuries of the Christian church, select choirs of professed musicians were quite generally relied upon for the due performance of sacred music. Nor is it clear, that any great change in this respect was accomplished before the days of Guido, who flourished in the eleventh century. Previously to that time, according to his own assertion, corroborated to some extent by the testimony of others, no one could learn to sing the Gregorian cantus, then the established music of the Roman church, without several years of study. And it is affirmed by writers who have investigated the musical systems of the ancient Greeks, from which the Gregorian music seems to have been derived,* that while they employed no less than sixteen hundred and twenty signs for the notation of musical sounds and their relations,† it

* Burney. Chr. Remembr., No. LXVI., p. 406. † Burney.

required several years of hard study and diligent practice to learn their musical characters, and play a tolerable accompaniment on the lyre.*

But in view of these facts it is very manifest, that no rule or principle with regard to the due performance of sacred music at the present day can be derived from the practice of the primitive church, or of any ancient Christians. Modern discoveries in the science of music, and improvements in the notation and vocal expression of musical sounds, have done more, by far, to render the art of singing generally practicable, than the invention of printing has done towards enabling all persons to read their own language. Now, the reading of music by its notes and signs requires only the knowledge of a few characters, not more numerous than the letters of the English language and its marks of punctuation. Nor is it requisite, as in ancient times, that to be a good singer, one should be a good grammarian, and thoroughly conversant with all the principles and rules of prosody, and the established usage or authority of poets, with regard to every word. On the contrary, there is no reason whatever, why any person, man, woman, or child, who is able to read, and endowed with an ear and voice to sing the most simple melody by rote, should not also be qualified to sing by note at sight, and with such words as may be proposed for the time, any music except elaborate anthems, that is proper to be used in the public worship of the church. There is nothing in the nature

* Lond. Encycl.

of vocal music, in the present state of this art, to prevent or hinder the due performance of the most beautiful and sublime chants, and the most graceful and elegant metrical tunes, by the united voices of all persons who can imitate a single tone of any of their fellow-creatures, or of any musical instrument. And yet there is, in general, such ignorance of the rudiments of vocal music among all classes in this country, not excepting professed musicians, that one might justly suppose most persons to have seriously adopted the objection which was urged against printed tunes, when one of our zealous forefathers, upon the publication of the first book of sacred music ever used in New England, maintained strenuously that Christians ought not to sing from a book. One deplorable result of this state of things is, that in many instances those portions of sacred music, which, under the circumstances of modern Christians, amid the improvements of modern times, should by all means be performed by all who have an ear and voice to sing any thing, are appropriated as quartettes to four singers. And these are frequently so far from being really qualified to perform with propriety any pieces well adapted to four voices, that they are unable to sing at any time, and much more unable to learn, the simplest strain of written or printed music, without the help of an instrument. The proportion of professional singers, including choristers and leaders of parts, who thus sing entirely by rote, would amaze the uninitiated, who are accustomed to submit but too patiently and tamely to conceited exclusiveness; while through the con-

trivance of a few *amateurs*, who are far from being *connoisseurs*, it debars from their proper share in the public worship of the house of God many whole congregations, including scores of excellent voices, often well trained, and in the constant, daily practice of good music. Most surely, "these things ought not so to be."

It is, however, no part of the object of these remarks to maintain that all music performed in public worship should be what is commonly called "congregational singing." On the contrary, it were better to lay down the general principle, that wherever a good substantial choir of persons able to read music at sight, and thus to sing by note, can be had, no other persons ought to sing in public worship, until they are qualified to join such a choir. Then, whether they actually join it or not, they will never interrupt, but always improve its music; in all such tunes as are not justly appropriated and confined to choirs. Anthems of elaborate design and structure, requiring, on account of their complicated movements of the several parts, much practice and repeated rehearsals of skilful singers, should, of course, be always left to such. And there may be occasionally metrical tunes, adapted to hymns of peculiar metres, in the performance of which no person of refined taste, though familiar with every strain and note, would presume to join, without previous practice in connection with the choir. But such tunes should not be often introduced, in the accustomed place of metrical psalms and hymns. These, in general, ought to be sung by the united voices of all who can con-

tribute at all to swell the pure, full harmony of a great congregation, pouring forth songs of praise with one consent before the Lord of all the earth. And few persons indeed, who are capable of distinguishing one tune from another, can ever have any good excuse for neglecting to join in the plainest of those tunes which are generally applied to psalms and hymns in rhyme.

From the time when Guido professed to teach boys to sing by note, within the space of one month,* and yet complained of some "miserable disciples of singers, who, though they should practise every day for one hundred years, would never be able to sing even one little antiphon themselves, nor without the help of a master," the space of one month has doubtless been sufficient to enable any intelligent child having a fair ear for music, to learn to sing by note independently, even according to the old system of solmization which was in vogue in this country some twenty-five years ago. In the mean time a decided and unquestionable improvement has been made upon that system by giving to each note in the diatonic scale a specific name, instead of using one syllable for two notes in three instances. And if that were not enough to render the reading of notes, and singing at sight sufficiently easy for all, many respectable teachers in this country have recently adopted a method† which is still more simple in some

* Hawkins, I., 444.

† This method, however, is not really a novelty. And what is here said of various methods of *solmization* or singing by note, has no reference to the modern system of musical *notation*, or the writing

respects, and especially adapted to such pupils as have peculiar need of the important aid of association of ideas; a system, which entirely dispenses with the continual transposition of the names of all the notes in the diatonic scale.

It is not necessary, therefore, to approve or reject the remark of Doctor Burney, that "perhaps what Pope says of different forms of government may be more justly applied to different methods of singing; "Whatever is best administered is best."* Under that system which was confessedly the most defective of the three here spoken of, an intelligent and diligent child of ten years, endowed with a good ear, could by moderate application, for a few days, learn to sing independently, by note, and at sight, any common metrical tune that might be truly called good music. And if under such circumstances, any due degree of attention to this matter could be awakened among clergymen, their general acquaintance with literature, their knowledge of the princi-

of notes. Respecting this the remark of Sir John Hawkins is more applicable at present than it was in the last century. Speaking of certain innovations then proposed, he says, Vol. IV. p. 225: "After all, the arguments urged in favor of these several innovations are none of them of weight sufficient to justify them, seeing that with all the difficulties imputed to it, the modern system of notation is a language that we find by experience,

'Girls may read, and boys may understand.'

But allowing it to be otherwise, it might admit of a question what would be gained by an innovation that would render the compositions of all former musicians as generally unintelligible as is at this day a Saxon manuscript."

* II., 106.

ples of prosody, and their taste and judgment, with regard to poetical compositions, might be relied on for speedy and substantial improvement of the character and standard of sacred music in many respects. Then would their opinions and suggestions, sustained and enforced by practical knowledge and personal experience, be respected and gladly received by choristers skilled in their art, and by organists profoundly versed in the science of music. And through the combined efforts of the three classes, heartily seconded by all who could in any way contribute to secure the due performance of sacred music, this important means of promoting and extending the salutary influence of Christianity would soon be rendered far more efficacious that it has ever yet been in this country. The real superiority of the music of the church to all other, even under the modern system which has done so much to raise secular music to its present position in a vastly improved state, would be conclusively manifest, if not universally acknowledged. And the holy songs of the church on earth would be much oftener than they are at present, a fitting type in all respects of the heavenly harmony of those who shall sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, for ever and ever, before the throne of the Majesty on high.

CONCLUSION.

It has been a leading object, in the foregoing view of Music, as it was and as it is, to illustrate the connection of modern music with the progress of Christian civilization. Incidentally, of course, some reference has been made to a certain prominent feature of ancient civilization, in Greece and Rome; namely, the intimate connection of ancient music with literature. A few words, therefore, respecting the high claims of music upon literary men, at the present day, will form a fitting conclusion of this argument.

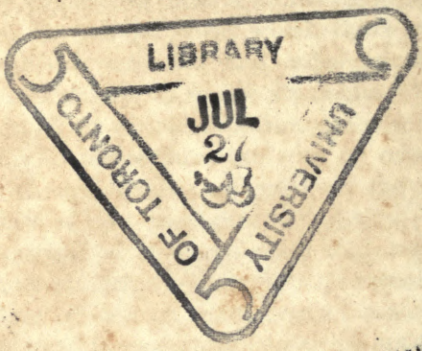
It is not merely as a science intimately connected with Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, that music possesses a just claim upon the attention of all who are devoted to the cultivation of science and the pursuit of learning in general. Nor yet is the art of music worthy of the care and study of literary men, merely on account of its influence as the handmaid or companion of poetry and oratory. On the contrary, in the present state of these several arts, music and poetry, though mutually subservient, to a certain extent, are yet in a high degree inde-

pendent of each other; and the connection of modern music with elocution, at least in the English tongue, though often insinuated by elocutionists unskilled in music, and implied in some of the strangely insignificant technical terms of their art, is by no means palpable to practiced singers. But modern music is, moreover, in itself, an interesting and wonderful science, very comprehensive and perfect. It is also an art, which, by itself alone, when preserved in its integrity, from all contaminating influence of demoralizing sentiments, actions and associations, is eminently adapted to humanize and elevate all classes of persons. It has thus an especial and indisputable claim upon those who seek the improvement of the mind, in any of the pursuits of literature, science and cultivated taste.

While, therefore, the generality of literary men, in this age and country, may be justly said to have deprived themselves, in a great degree, through mere indolence or heedlessness, of one of the most delightful of all the rational enjoyments provided by a Beneficent Creator, they have, at the same time, failed to exert a due influence for the promotion of an art, which, in all ages of the world, and even in a state of great imperfection, has been ranked by many of the wisest and best of every age among the most effectual means of improving, regulating, advancing and adorning human society. Doubtless, dissociated as are the kindred arts of music and poetry at the present time, they might be made largely beneficial to each other, by due attention to the most definite and plain principles of both, on the part of all who

are competent to exert an influence upon the character of either. And this is a remark which is no less applicable to secular music, with its many offences against the laws of English verse and cultivated taste, than to sacred music with its many blemishes, from faulty versions of the psalms of David in metre, and popular hymns, ill-adapted to the use of choirs and the hand of good composers. Indeed, the character of secular songs at the present day is such as to render applicable to many of them, for a generation to come, the expressive lamentation of Doctor Burney, concerning those of former centuries, "Alas! what is the secular music which thirty years have not withered, wrinkled and superannuated?" So truly does music, to secure its continual advancement, in all its various relations, demand the efforts, not only of theologians, but also of other literary men; enough having appeared, in the view here presented of the past progress, present state and true standard of music, to show that, without such efforts, much information which is essential to the perfection of this art, must remain inaccessible on the one hand to such musicians as are not conversant with classical literature and ecclesiastical history, or on the other, to classical scholars unacquainted with the technical language of music.

THE END.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